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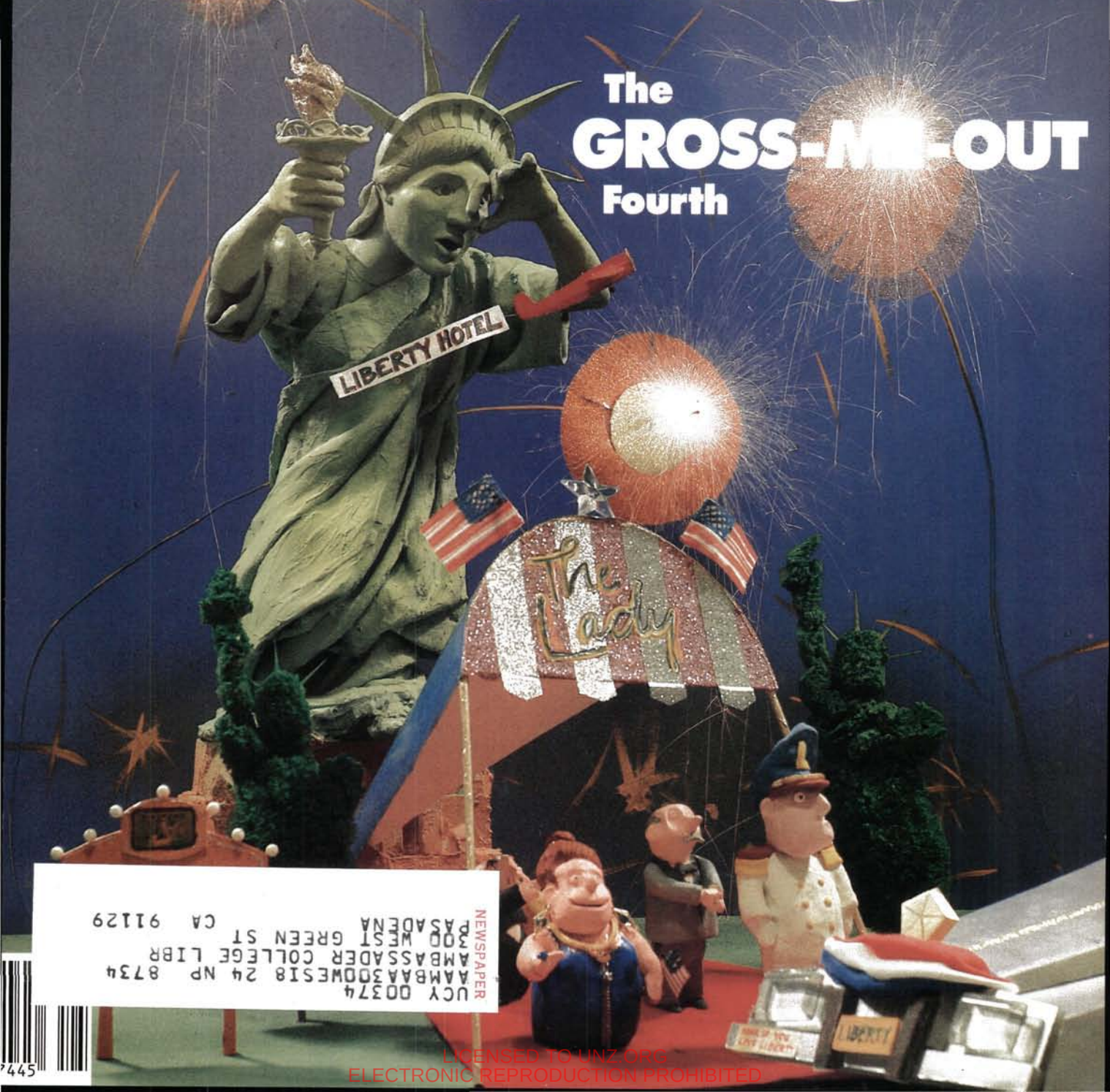
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How California Became Second-Rate

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JUNE 23, 1986

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

PSSSST

The growing revelations about insider trading on Wall Street are another example of TRB's Law of Scandal: the scandal isn't what's illegal, the scandal is what's legal. A few young sharpies have been caught allegedly breaking the rules that forbid especially crude versions of the basic stock-market transaction—people in the know making money off people who aren't in the know. Information is the mother's milk of Wall Street, and it's only valuable if you've got it first. Few fortunes are made by watching Louis

Rukeyser on PBS, whereas many are made at the expense of Mr. Rukeyser's viewers.

The media have taken up the amusing theme that this outbreak of insider trading is caused by the excessive greed of the younger generation. YUPPIE \$CAM headlined the *New York Post* after a recent set of arrests. "Twisted values did them in," opined an accompanying news analysis by Dr. Joyce Brothers. Actually, greed has not been unknown on Wall Street before now. In fact, it's hard to think of any selfless reason for playing the market. But two recent developments have given greed new opportunities for self-expression.

First, the wave of mergers and buy-outs has created a whole new category of surefire inside information. These deals almost always involve a large premium over the market price. Because the deals are complex, dozens of people end up knowing that a share now trading at \$40 or \$50 is about to be worth \$60 or \$70. Second, the development of exotic new forms of trading in options and futures and option futures has produced new ways to bet at long odds on small changes—either way—in a stock price. This makes it easier to cash in on tiny

bits of good information.

There is a school of thought that insider trading should not be punished since it is a "victimless crime." It's true that the victim of any particular trade is often hard to identify. The person who sells to or buys from someone with inside knowledge on a public stock exchange would have traded with someone else at about the same price if the insider hadn't come along. However, it's a mathematical certainty that when insiders benefit, outsiders lose. Nothing about insider trading affects the price of a stock in the long run. (Indeed, the value of inside information comes from knowing in advance where a stock is heading anyway.) Nor does insider trading increase the total value of stocks on the market. Therefore, the profit of those with inside knowledge comes from the pockets of those without that advantage.

On the other hand, the effort to make the stock market a "level playing field" for Ivan Arbitrageur and Aunt Arlene in Florida alike is futile and probably would destroy the market if it succeeded. A stock price is the capitalized value of all the known information about that stock. The more information there is, and the quicker it comes out, the better the market functions. But *someone* must have the information first, and the Wall Street professionals who spend their lives ferreting out information about companies need *some* incentive to do so. The distinction between "good" information that is the proper reward for insight and resourcefulness and "bad" information that amounts to cheating isn't even clear in theory, let alone in practice.

Looking for a middle ground through this conceptual swamp, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Supreme Court have come up with a set of distinctions that make no sense. The Court has held that profiting on inside information isn't wrong unless you owe a "fiduciary duty" to the other party in the transaction. Suppose you're a corporate officer. If you know your company's stock is about to go up, you're denying some shareholder his rightful profit when you buy his shares at the lower price while he's in the dark. Likewise if you're a banker or a lawyer for the company involved.

Trouble is, this theory seems to let you off the hook if you profit from secret good news about some other company (say, the fact that your company is

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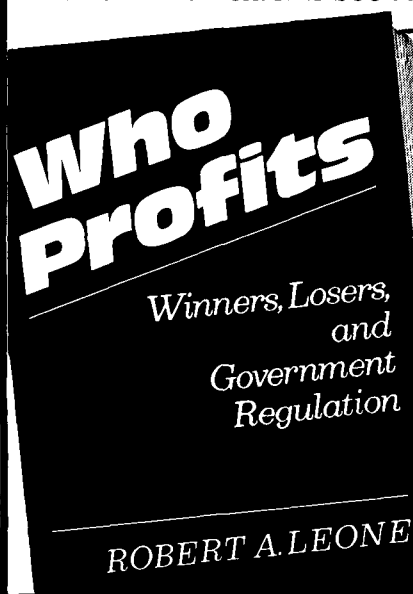
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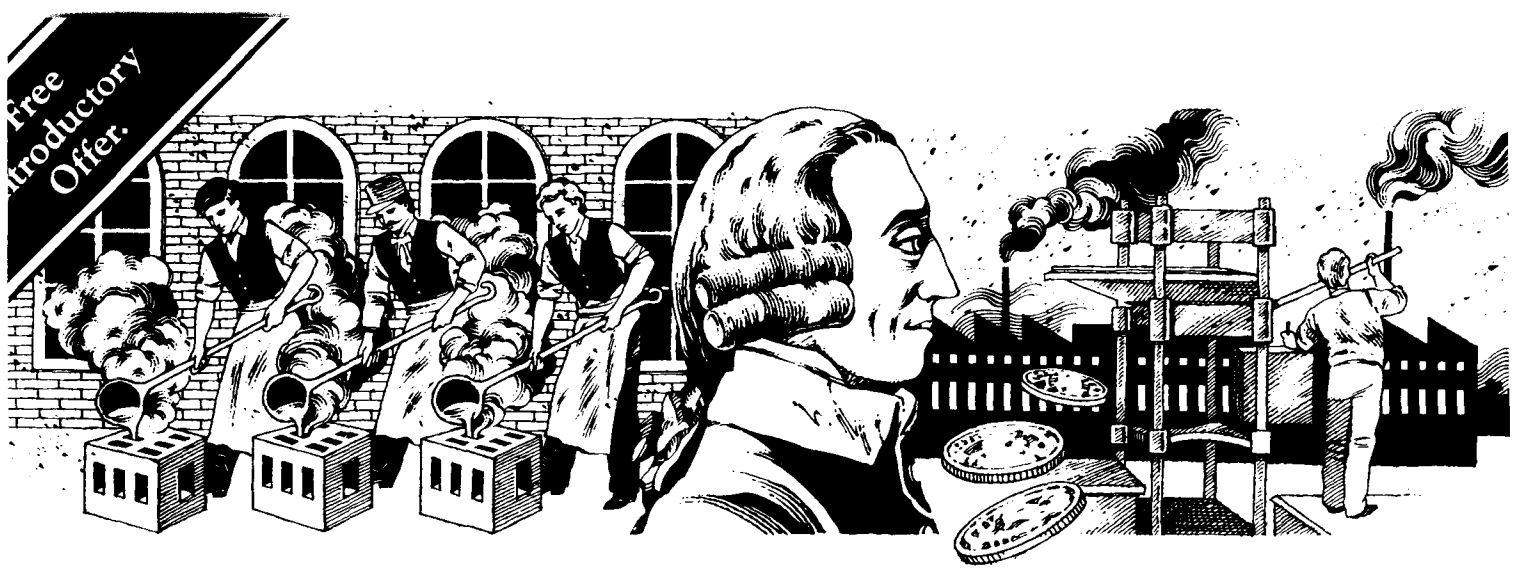
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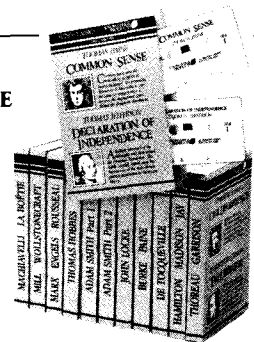
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CORRESPONDENCE

THE PACS TALK BACK

To the editors:

In Robert Kuttner's article on Jewish PACs ("Unholy Alliance," May 26), he describes me as "defending the likes of the Reverends Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Bailey Smith." If placing these men in a fairer perspective than Kuttner's prosecutorial stereotyping is "defending them," I plead guilty. Still, I feel compelled to set the record straight.

On my "defense" of Falwell: I suggested to Kuttner that surveys have revealed that more Fundamentalists and Evangelicals hold an unfavorable view of the Moral Majority than hold a favorable view. Also that the views of Fundamentalists and Evangelicals, on a variety of social and political issues, were generally reflective of the American public's. Consequently, attributing to them Falwell's political views was simply inaccurate.

On Robertson: I told Mr. Kuttner that in my view describing Robertson as if he were a pea in a pod with several other TV evangelists was inaccurate. As an example, I told him that as a guest on Robertson's "700 Club" I explained why Jews are nervously concerned by, and why we litigate against, Christian symbols in public places. Robertson was not only a sympathetic conversationalist on his own telecast, but replayed that interview several times.

On Smith: I offered the opinion that when Smith opined that "God does not hear the prayer of a Jew," he was engaging in a religious conceit, but that I put credence in the sincerity of his subsequent apology for the hurt he may have caused. But curiously, Kuttner doesn't go into this. He dwells on an insensitive foot-in-mouth statement made in Israel by Smith and makes no reference to his (Kuttner's) agreeing with me that when a former chief rabbi of Jerusalem (Orthodox) once declared that God doesn't hear the *shofar* (ram's horn) when it's blown in a Conservative synagogue, he was indulging the same kind of religious conceit that Smith did. My point in my "defense" of Smith was that religious conceits are not restricted to Baptists and that they ain't necessarily a pogrom.

As to Kuttner's excoriation of my colleague David Lehrer because he maintained that Congressman Dornan's reference to Vladimir Posner as a "disloyal,

betraying little Jew" was misunderstood: not only did Mr. Lehrer assert that Dornan was referring to Posner's disloyalty to Jews, but so did Representative Tom Lantos, Democrat of California, who said of Dornan, "I know of no individual in this body who has less bigotry in his mind and heart than Bob Dornan."

NATHAN PERLMUTTER

National Director

*Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
New York, New York*

To the editors:

The article "Unholy Alliance" leaves its readers with two mistaken impressions as far as our PAC's decisions on which candidates to support. First, Kuttner asserts that I made a negative "assessment" of Wisconsin Senate candidate Ed Garvey's position on Israel-related issues based on the failure of Garvey's union, the National Football League Players Association, to oppose a specific arms sale, and second, that I refused to meet with him. Actually, I did indeed meet and speak to Garvey at the reception cited. It is also true that Garvey's association refused to oppose this sale after being solicited to do so by a broad labor coalition. What isn't mentioned in the article is that the leaders of the coalition thought that this decision made by Garvey was a substantive one.

At the time, that was the only significant piece of information we had about Garvey's position on an issue of importance to the PAC. As soon as we received a copy of Garvey's position paper, its positive nature was duly noted in our newsletter.

MORRIS J. AMITAY

Treasurer

*Washington Political Action Committee
Washington, D.C.*

To the editors:

Robert Kuttner tries to gloss over the differences that Jews have with liberal Democrats and to exaggerate those they have with conservatives and Republicans. For example, we read nothing in his article about the refusal of the 1984 Democratic National Convention to condemn anti-Semitism in the wake of racist remarks made by Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan. Nor do we read about the growing support among liberal Democrats for affirmative action quotas, a position that, I venture, most American

Jews consider hostile to their interests.

Kuttner assumes that there cannot be any reason for Jews to support Republican or conservative candidates other than the latter's support for Israel. His attempts to disparage the National Jewish Coalition are the result of his inability to believe that Jews can support conservative positions or Republican candidates out of conviction. Yet American Jews are increasingly supporting these candidates precisely because they recognize that the policies that help preserve the security of the United States and promote economic growth are today pursued, not by liberals and Democrats, but by conservatives and Republicans.

RICHARD J. FOX

National Chairman

*National Jewish Coalition
Washington, D.C.*

THE SOLARZ TASK FORCE

To the editors:

The essay by Christopher Layne in your May 19 issue ("The Solarz Report") seriously misrepresents the product and process of the Democratic Party's Task Force on Foreign Policy, which I chair.

Mr. Layne asserts that our task-force report was "issued" in April. In fact, the document he appears to be referring to was a draft. The final version of the report will be released in June.

Actually, it is not entirely clear what paper Mr. Layne has cited inasmuch as he describes our task-force report as calling for aid to the non-Communist resistance in Cambodia. It is true that I wrote, Congress passed, and THE NEW REPUBLIC endorsed legislation backing aid for the democratic resistance in Cambodia, but our task force has never taken a position on this issue. It is difficult to understand how Mr. Layne could make his assertion about Cambodia when that subject has never been mentioned in any of the drafts of the task-force report.

Mr. Layne implies that our task force virtually ignores human rights abuses by the left. Yet in the report we condemn repression in the Soviet Union, Poland, and Nicaragua and advocate aid for the Afghan *mujahadeen*.

I am confident that the final version of our report, which will bear little resemblance to Mr. Layne's curious

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JUNE 23, 1986

TEACHERS GO PRO

Reports on the state of American education follow a consistent pattern. They begin with a chapter of frenzied metaphors describing the desperate plight of America's schools. Next they assess the need for reform in happy-talk educationese, dropping the word "excellence" or "achievement" several times on each page. They invariably end by calling for more money all around, especially for underpaid, underappreciated, and overworked teachers. Sifting through these murky documents, one finds a few fresh ideas for every gallon of mud.

The recently published report of the Carnegie Forum Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, is no exception. It was written by a committee of 15 people with opposing views—including business people, politicians, and the presidents of both major teachers' unions—and not surprisingly the report delicately skirts some of the most contentious issues facing the public schools, including the firing of incompetent teachers. Yet stripped of its qualifications and concessions, *A Nation Prepared* issues a strong statement about the faults of our public schools, and contains some sound suggestions for attacking the problem.

The report argues that teachers should be "professionals" who run their schools rather than employees who serve at the command of patronizing administrators. They should be promoted, titled, and paid according to their ability and training rather than according to seniority and graduate credits. The professional models the authors of the study have in mind are law, medicine, and accounting. According to the plan, educators would work under

close supervision as "interns" and "residents" early in their careers. They would be certified by a national board, which would set uniform standards for all 50 states. Advanced "lead teachers" would run their schools the way senior partners manage law firms. Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers and a member of the task force, says there's no reason the super-teacher of the future shouldn't earn a salary of \$100,000.

Recent literature on effective corporate management provides the obvious inspiration for this scheme. The drift of books like *In Search of Excellence* is that well-run companies are ones in which employees have a financial and personal stake. It's hardly surprising that teachers whose low salaries are compounded by mindless paperwork and unruly students become disenchanted with their jobs. Business faltering? Instill a sense of pride and achievement in the workers, the Carnegie task force suggests, and the company will begin to recover.

In its ideal form, such a system would both demand tougher standards for certification and promise more prestige and higher salaries. Teaching needs all three. But most of all, schools need to attract highly motivated, talented young people who want to teach. The most ambitious college graduates don't yearn for a career in teaching; they aspire to become lawyers or investment bankers. Drawing from this pool of talent is the surest way to arrest the disheartening decline in teacher quality.

The bright young college graduates who do become teachers tend to go to private and parochial schools, where they generally work longer hours for lower salaries than

they'd earn in the public schools. Why do they choose to make this sacrifice? In part, it's because the quality of the students is higher, and the bureaucracy has a human face. Another reason is that liberal arts and science graduates, however knowledgeable about their subjects, usually aren't certified to teach in public schools. Most state boards require an undergraduate degree in education, a subject that intellectually curious college students avoid like a disease. It's no coincidence that the average verbal SAT score of intended education majors hovers around 400—about 50 points below the abysmal national average. The Carnegie report wisely proposes abolishing undergraduate degrees in education altogether, and requiring prospective educators to major in history, chemistry, or whatever subject they plan to teach. This makes obvious sense. As it is now, an education major trained in child psychology and physical education often ends up teaching American history or English.

Abolishing the undergraduate education degree is a fine start. The Carnegie task force should have recommended dropping the graduate education degree too. Although the report conveys only a foggy notion of how "residents" would become "lead teachers," it does hint that promotion might involve taking graduate courses in education. If the goal is to reward teaching talent, why bother with empty credentials? Proven ability alone should guide promotions and pay raises. If there are to be lead teachers, they should be elected by peers, students, principals, and parents, who can truly judge their work, rather than by a piece of sheepskin acquired over the summer or at night school. Such a proposal need not mean a reversion to the old system of merit pay so despised by teachers: small bonuses awarded to the principal's favored few. Indeed, the assumption of the Carnegie report, like that of the widely publicized 1983 National Commission on Excellence in Education study, *A Nation at Risk*, is that merit raises are only one part of a new system of evaluation and promotion that both demands consistently high standards and rewards exceptional performance.

EVEN THE report's measured recommendations have incurred the wrath of the country's largest teachers' union, the National Education Association. Mary Futrell, the president of the NEA and a member of the task force, said she wouldn't sign the report if it didn't include her dissenting opinions. In her statement of "reservations," Futrell complains that the report "suggests that some teachers are more equal than others"—in other words, that some teachers are good and some are lousy. In the rest of her statement, Futrell disavows nearly all of the good ideas contained in the report. The NEA continues to regard as anathema the idea that teachers should be rewarded on the basis of anything other than credentials, preferring to protect the worst teachers from tests, standards, or God forbid, firing—a word that the Carnegie report dares not use. The NEA has proved once again that it stands as the single biggest impediment to any fundamental educational reform.

NEA obstructionism has been clearest in the few states that have made serious attempts to reform their educational

structures. Foremost among these is Tennessee, where Governor Lamar Alexander has promoted a "career ladder" plan of professional advancement and merit pay. The Tennessee Education Association, which is the local NEA affiliate, has fought him every inch of the way, and has won on many issues. To take a trivial example, the TEA got Alexander's teacher titles—professional, senior, and master—changed to levels I, II, and III, saying that his names "implied competency" and that the term "master" recalled the days of slavery. Alexander succeeded only in getting the remains of his plan through the Tennessee legislature by persuading parents and a number of enlightened educators that even bad teachers had nothing to fear from his career ladder. Having learned his lesson, Alexander now says that his plan "is designed to reward, encourage, and honor—not penalize."

Echoing this theme, the Carnegie report says that "it is unfair to those now in place to change the rules under them all at once." That's NEA reasoning. Isn't it far more unfair to protect teachers who are helping to create a new generation of dropouts and functional illiterates?

THE REPORT IS marred, unfortunately, in several other ways as well. The ill-defined national certification board might easily turn into another layer of pointless bureaucracy if it doesn't replace existing state and local boards of certification, whose standards vary widely. And in arguing for the managerial wonderland notion of lead teachers running their schools, the report makes no mention of the crucial role that principals play. In the model schools that the report envisions it is unclear whether decisions would be made by committee or whether one person would have ultimate authority. It may take a committee to write an education report, but an able principal alone can do much to instill an ethos of success in students and teachers.

Finally, the report fails to give sufficient attention to the potential contributions of nonprofessionals to the public schools. Liberal arts and science majors from the best colleges need to be made welcome, as do retirees and those in other careers who want to try teaching for a few years. There's a special need to recruit temporary teachers in math and science, areas of acute shortage. Public schools can't match entry-level salaries at IBM. But they can convince IBM to encourage its future employees to give a few years back to the schools. Doing so would help to guarantee corporations a steady supply of able new recruits, instead of a generation of scientific illiterates.

One good idea the Carnegie report doesn't raise is that of offering student loans and grants in exchange for pledges of a few years of service to the schools. Schools should appeal to idealism and patriotism, much as the Peace Corps and the Army try to do. It goes without saying that any serious proposal for a system of national service should include a teaching option for those who are qualified. But short of conscription, many graduating students shopping for careers could easily be persuaded to devote a few years to the cause of making classrooms more hospitable places for their own children. Joining the Marines isn't the only way to serve your country. □

SACRIFICING SALT

For those who care about the prevention of nuclear war—who believe that the test of any scheme for the management of deterrence is whether or not it genuinely reduces the nuclear danger—it is a little hard to understand all the fuss about the American abrogation of the SALT II treaty. Even those who helped to negotiate the treaty will admit that the unratified document was merely a ratification of reality, a codification of the technological and strategic direction of two more or less similar thermonuclear arsenals. The treaty was no wrench in the nuclear works. It did not prevent the development of the next generation of ICBMs. Rather, it specified this development, on both sides.

It is amusing to hear conservatives insist that SALT II was an obstacle to American military strength. If the United States does not now field the MX, for example, it is not because of arms control. SALT II permitted the MX. But something is not wise just because it is permitted, and so far the Reagan administration has failed to convince Congress and the people of the MX's wisdom. It is also amusing to watch the arms control community carry on as if the abrogation of SALT II means the end of the world. From a strictly military standpoint, SALT II was a bust. Just as conservatives must see that the treaty was no impediment to American power, liberals must see that it was no impediment to the arms race, either.

From a strictly military standpoint, then, the president's decision should occasion no strong feeling. But there are other standpoints from which to judge arms control. The political and psychological rewards of arms control should not be lightly dismissed. In recent years, for example, arms control has come to bear the brunt of the Soviet-American relationship. The elaboration of that relationship now takes place more in Switzerland than in the United States or the Soviet Union. While it is dangerous to rest so large a portion of world peace upon so small and fragile a plinth as arms control, the fact remains that the superpowers have done so. For that reason it may be foolish to measure the value of the treaty merely by numbers of weapons.

Moreover, in the unnerving universe of nuclear deterrence, the presence of a principle of restraint is certainly better than its absence. If there are no quantitative limitations upon the number of warheads the Soviets may produce, for example, our land-based missiles will be permanently vulnerable. The world with SALT II was quite Hobbesian enough, thank you. The world without it will certainly be no better.

Except, of course, for some planners and policy-makers in the White House and the Pentagon. The most repugnant thing about the administration's decision to scuttle the treaty is its argument, pitched on national

television with a perfectly straight face, that it is abrogating arms control for the sake of arms control. American officials pretend that their reason for abandoning the treaty is that they want a better one, when everything in their political and intellectual past proves that in truth they want no treaty at all. President Reagan's decision should be understood for what it is: the belated triumph of one of the cardinal tenets of Reaganism, which is the conviction that arms control is itself a danger to the security of the United States. The writings of the Reagan intellectuals during the 1970s and 1980s abound in this conviction. (A recent headline in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Hitler Used Arms Control to Advantage.")

Of course, a principle of restraint that is violated by one side is worse than no principle of restraint at all. SALT II was already an abrogated treaty. About the Soviet Union's violations there is no longer any doubt. Its development of the SS-25 missile and its "encryption of telemetry" (the scrambling of the Soviet Union's information about its missile tests, leaving the United States without the information it has a right to know) are not exactly minor infringements. The United States has good reason to feel that in SALT II we have been pursuing a policy of unilateral compliance; and again, in a balance of terror unilateral compliance is about as stabilizing as no compliance at all. The Soviets may now pretend (on American television, as usual) that they care deeply for SALT II. But their deeds of the last few years belie their words of the last few weeks.

Should the president have stayed the SALT course? Probably, though not because SALT made the world a safer place. It certainly did not make the world a more dangerous place, though, and its ancillary benefits did not interfere with the evolution of America's strategic forces. Yet supporters of arms control should choose their fights correctly. A fight for SALT II might waste energy that would be better reserved for the really important American violation of the future, which is the inevitable violation of the ABM treaty for the sake of strategic defense. A distinction must be made between quantitative arms control and qualitative arms control, between a treaty that controls numbers of weapons and a treaty that controls types of weapons. SALT II is an example of the former, the ABM treaty is an example of the latter. The former will probably accomplish very little toward the lessening of the nuclear danger. The latter may accomplish much. (A treaty banning weapons from space would be an achievement for which our children will honor us, like the treaty banning biological warfare.) SALT II stood in the way of not a single American program, and it has been scuttled. The ABM treaty stands in the way of what may become the largest American program in the history of the nuclear age. *It* is the real target of Caspar Weinberger, Richard Perle, Kenneth Adelman, and the others who are happy to take the heat for their plan now rather than later. *It* is what should be preserved. □

NEW BATTLE LINES IN BEIRUT

For years the phrase "the Green Line" was a convenient journalistic reference, not just for a demarcation point on the Beirut map but for the ongoing civil war between Lebanon's Christian and Moslem populations. The images of death being rained across that line have been so vivid for so long that the fratricidal reality of Lebanon seemed to be both contained and exhausted in that one cartographic metaphor. The latest round of Beirut fratricide, taking place entirely in West Beirut—the Moslem side of the Green Line—demonstrates that this is not so.

Of course blood will continue to be spilled between what are known in the region as the "Friday people" and the "Sunday people." But this is because, in the Middle East, revenge lives a long and autonomous life, wholly beyond practical aims and possibilities. By now the cause of the Maronites, which is what "Christian" means in the Lebanese context, is all but obsolete—not a matter of communal power anymore, but of sheer survival. And even survival is uncertain, even with Amin Gemayel, the Duke of Ba'abda, sitting in the presidential palace—an especially pathetic instance of office without authority.

Yet the collapse of the Maronites has not enhanced the sway of their Moslem enemies. In the Lebanese context, "Moslem" has usually meant the Sunnis. But the Sunnis will not be the inheritors. Now West Beirut is at war with itself. The Shiite insurgency against the Sunni elites today targets the local Palestinians, once again betrayed by their leaders into being pawns and inevitably scapegoats of other factions. Because Arafat cannot envision the compromises that would relieve the suffering of his people, he leads them, again and again, into alliances with a delusory hegemony as their aim. His present ally, Lebanon's traditional Sunni leadership, is itself demoralized and divided, united only in its desire that the ragged Palestinians absorb the first blows of the Shiite revolt—not, by the way, a revolt merely of Shiite fundamentalists, but of the Shiite mainstream and of Amal, its military arm.

There is an irony in this: the Palestinian cause, which once was thought (wrongly, to be sure) to fuel and animate Moslem politics as a whole, is now being consumed and subsumed in the Moslem civil war. The battle within West Beirut is but one skirmish in the historic struggle between the heirs and descendants of the Prophet.

NOTEBOOK

□ SHIVA NAIPAUL PRIZE: Shiva Naipaul, the distinguished British journalist and occasional contributor to TNR, died last year at the age of 40. The *Spectator* of London, the publication Naipaul was most closely associated with, has established a writing prize in his memory. Reflecting Naipaul's own specialty, the prize will go to "the writer best

able to describe a visit to a foreign place or people." The judges caution: "The award will not be for travel writing in the conventional sense, but for the most acute and profound observation of cultures and/or scenes evidently alien to the writer." Entries must be unpublished works of less than 4,000 words by a writer under age 35. The winning entry will be published in the *Spectator*. The deadline is October 31. The address of the *Spectator* is 56 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LL, U.K.

□ BORING HEADLINE UPDATE:

Pan Am Jumbo Jet Lands Safely

—*Washington Post*, May 14

Tribal fighting in Papua New Guinea nothing to worry about, officials say

—*Baltimore Sun*, May 18

A few Colombians vote today

Not many will turn out in land where 'nothing ever happens'

—*San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, May 25

□ CORRECTIONS: In Peter Lubin's "The Waldheim File" (TNR, June 16), the sentence "Waldheim's Balkan career was never examined by the Yugoslav Commission on War Crimes when it considered charges against him in December 1947" should have read: "These earlier episodes in Waldheim's Balkan career were not even reached by the Yugoslav Commission on War Crimes when it considered charges against him in December 1947." In Hendrik Hertzberg's Boston *Diarist* last week, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend should have been described as running for Republican Helen Bentley's seat in Maryland, not Democrat Barbara Mikulski's.

□ THE INSCRUTABLE SECRETARY:

U.S. Caution on S. Africa Vital: Shultz

Los Angeles Times, June 3, front page

SHULTZ DENOUNCES APARTHEID, SAYING: 'IT MUST GO SOON'

New York Times, same day, same page

PAPER CHASE

THIS WEEK'S quiz: name the only monopoly, or near-monopoly, industry in America.

Those of you who answered catsup are wrong. There are several brands other than Heinz, although I can't think of them now either. Those of you who answered daily newspapers are right. In fact, due to your perspicacity, there's a job waiting for you in the Acquisitions Department at Gannett or Times Mirror.

Last month Gannett, the largest chain in the country, with 93 newspapers, bought the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and *Times* for \$305 million. A few weeks later Times Mirror, which owns the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday*, and seven other dailies, bought the *Baltimore Sun* and two TV stations for \$600 million. Gannett paid a price that worked out to about \$25 for every dollar of profit the Louisville papers made last year. Times Mirror got a slightly better deal. But Baltimore? Louisville? Hardly America's sexiest markets.

The attraction of the papers was that they're the only dailies in their towns. The *Baltimore News-American*, a 200-year-old skimpy Hearst paper, folded the day before Times Mirror bought the *Sun*; its circulation had dropped to below 100,000. The Louisville papers, which were sold by the Bingham family because the siblings couldn't stop squabbling, have dominated the city for decades.

Like greyhounds chasing mechanical rabbits at the dog track, American capitalists are always pursuing monopolies—but never quite catching them. The idea of owning a company that makes something that no one else makes but that lots of people want makes grown men drool. If you have a monopoly, you get to set the price. But there aren't any monopolies anymore—except the sort of temporary ones created by patent laws, and except daily newspapers, which are one-town monopolies. Which is good enough, it seems.

The stock market, apparently, has just realized how valuable these monopolies can be. Gannett is trading at 26 times earnings. In other words, investors are willing to pay \$26 to buy one dollar of Gannett's profits—that's a rate that is 50 percent higher than they're willing to pay for the average stock. The New York Times Company, which owns 26 dailies, is trading at 25 times earnings. Knight-Ridder, which owns 27 dailies accounting for 3.6 million daily circulation (number two among the chains behind Gannett), is also at 25 times earnings.

What this means is that media companies can pay huge prices for newspapers and still not dilute their earnings. On the other hand, what kind of deals are they getting? The Louisville papers, for example, are said to have made around \$13 million last year. If Gannett vastly improves that performance, getting the earnings up to \$20 million, the company will be making a return of about 6.5 percent on its \$305 million investment. Two-year Treasury notes are pay-

ing 7.5 percent right now, and they're a lot less risky.

It seems that both the public and the media companies are doing something besides making a strictly economic investment. There's little doubt that Gannett is buying a certain glamour and respectability. In 1972 Al Neuharth took over a company that owned 53 newspapers across the country—such obscurities as the *Danville* (Illinois) *Commercial-News* (circ. 26,537), the *Utica* (New York) *Observer-Dispatch* (circ. 33,378), and the *Chambersburg* (Pennsylvania) *Public Opinion* (circ. 19,557). These were good little businesses, throwing off nice profits. They were true monopolies, and Gannett was able to cut costs and raise ad rates with impunity.

Then Neuharth began buying other papers, bigger and bigger papers: the Nashville *Tennessean* (circ. 122,326), the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (circ. 309,878), the *Detroit News* (circ. 645,016). In these cities (in addition to the Gannett papers in Tucson, Honolulu, Knoxville, El Paso, and Shreveport) the Gannett papers are published under joint operating agreements with their competitors—a situation that in any other business would be an antitrust violation, but that, thanks to the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1971, is not only legal but downright patriotic. Thus Neuharth had the best of both worlds: the appearance of competition plus government approval of monopolistic practices. Neuharth's big venture into a truly competitive market, *USA Today*, has probably lost \$350 million since it was started in 1982.

"Gannett used the profits from the little papers to buy bigger papers and get itself noticed," says an executive of a large paper. It hasn't been cheap, but it's worked. The company is now loaded with debt, but Wall Street loves it. Gannett stock has quadrupled over the past four years.

But I've got to admit that I'm suspicious of companies that grow by taking over other companies at big prices—especially when the appetites of their managers play a role. Gannett wants anything it can get its hands on. Times Mirror bought Baltimore (this is the way they talk in the newspaper business, like Cosa Nostra gangsters: "Yeah, Gannett owns Rochester, and it splits Detroit with Knight-Ridder") almost certainly because of its long-unsated lust for Washington; Baltimore is the back door.

The biggest problem is that these apparent monopolies aren't monopolies at all. A city may have only one daily newspaper, but that newspaper competes for the attention of the public and for advertising with lots of other media. Even in a city like New Orleans, which lacks both size and wealth, the monopoly Newhouse paper, the *Times-Picayune/States-Item*, has competition from seven major TV stations plus a dozen or so cable stations, 20 radio stations, two business tabloids, one monthly magazine, one city-wide weekly, and a number of suburban papers. Washington is surrounded by strong suburban dailies and weeklies, as are Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and New York.

In fact, while everyone has been paying attention to the big prices being paid for dailies, the real action has been with non-daily community newspapers, whose profit margins range up to 40 percent. Over the past 20 years, while the total circulation of dailies has been flat, the total circulation of these 1,800 papers has doubled. The reason

that the Pulitzer newspaper chain is considered such a gem is not its St. Louis daily but its 62 suburban papers, mostly weeklies, that ring Chicago. While Gannett and Times Mirror have been buying dailies, companies such as Ingersoll, Scripps Howard, and Harte-Hanks have been snatching up little weeklies.

Sure, daily papers will endure. But the best of them are the ones that are changing by putting out what amount to new products within their pages. The *Washington Post* publishes a highly successful weekly business tabloid, a Friday entertainment tabloid, and recently, a new real estate tabloid. In September it introduces a revamped Sunday supplement that's supposed to look and feel like a real upscale magazine. All of these ventures resulted, at least in part, from competitive pressures.

Dailies are feeling the heat even in such areas as classified advertising. A big Washington real estate company recently started a weekly half-hour TV commercial that features video tours of 40 houses that are for sale that weekend: "Now, get out your pencil and paper and turn on your VCR," the voice-over says.

What I admire most in the media racket is restraint. Consider the Washington Post Company. Its eponymous paper is probably the single best monopoly in the country (well, near-monopoly: the *Post* has competition from the Reverend Moon's *Washington Times*, which is probably better than no competition at all). It owns only one other newspaper, the 55,000-circulation *Everett* (Washington state) *Herald*. The *Post* is usually out there, looking at

properties, bidding on family newspapers (including Louisville). But it always loses. And with good reason.

"Media companies," writes Ross F. Hamacheck, the *Post*'s vice president for planning and development, in the company's annual report, "are made up of essentially unlinked businesses. . . . It does not much help the economic performance of one's newspaper operations to be in television (or vice versa), and it is only marginally more important whether one has two or ten businesses of a given type."

What this means, says Hamacheck, is that a media company has to have "a sense of value and the discipline necessary not to lose sight of it in bidding for media properties," or put another way, "a patiently opportunistic decision-making predicated on a better sense of value than one's competitors." Hardly the motto of Gannett.

The *Post* Company's rule is that it needs an after-tax return of 15 percent on an investment—a dubious proposition for Gannett in Louisville, unless it chops editorial costs with a meat cleaver.

The *Post*'s stock has gone from 61 to 171 in two years, but it's still trading at a lower multiple of earnings than Gannett, Knight-Ridder, and the like. Part of the problem may be that the *Post*, while it owns TV stations like the other media big boys, also owns a significantly less profitable newsweekly. But most of the problem is that, these days, Wall Street loves monopolies—even fake monopolies. And it loves CEOs who are big eaters.

JAMES K. GLASSMAN

LibertyPress

ORIGINS OF THE COMMON LAW

By Arthur R. Hogue



First published in 1966, *Origins of the Common Law* looks at the medieval roots of our legal system during the early formative period of the common law. Between 1154 and 1307, common law experienced a spectacular growth as a legal system enforced in the English Royal Courts. In the form of writs, judicial decisions, treatises, royal ordinances, and parliamentary statutes, the common law, emerged into explicit written form and formal procedure.

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WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE AGENDA GAP

THE ONE-TERM, six-year presidency, a perennial favorite recommendation of high-minded commissions and thoughtful observers of all sorts, is a screw-ball idea. But it does have a nice objective: a president able to make bold decisions and carry them out, unencumbered by politics. Lloyd Cutler, the White House legal counsel under Jimmy Carter, says the single-term limitation would allow the president to adopt tough policies "in the national interest" and marshal broad public support for them. The Jefferson Foundation, a goo-goo group, goes further. It would "remove the diversion and disruption caused by the campaign for reelection. The president would pay more attention to the national interest and less attention to political popularity in making and instituting policies. A single term would free him to make courageous decisions."

Would this work? As it happens, we are carrying out an experiment in this long-dreamed-of arrangement right now. You don't need the six-year term to free the president from the chains of humdrum politics. Ronald Reagan has already been freed. He has no more election races to run. Furthermore, he remains spectacularly popular. The Gallup Poll found this spring that Reagan has more support now than after his landslide reelection in 1984. Even the likable Dwight Eisenhower didn't manage this in the sixth year of his presidency. Richard Wirthlin, the president's personal pollster, says Reagan's public approval rating has settled nicely this year in the mid-70s (an eye-catching 75 percent favorability in May, for example). He told the White House senior staff in late May that no president has ever done better in sustaining a high job rating.

But what is Reagan saving his chips for? The theory of advocates of the one-term presidency is that a popular president freed of the need to run for reelection will take bold, nonpartisan steps in the national interest. The hope of conservative ideologues is that, instead of hoarding his popularity, Reagan will spend it in unabashed pursuit of the conservative agenda. Both groups are going to be disappointed. It seems that the need for public approval is something built into politicians, regardless of whether they'll ever be seeking votes again.

The dirty little secret at the White House is that, once tax reform clears Congress this summer, Reagan has no particular agenda at all. Sure, he wants to hold on to what he's got—lower tax rates, Star Wars research, the Reagan Doctrine, etc. But there are no big plans for his final two years. Wirthlin told Hugh Sidey of *Time* that Reagan does better on offense than on defense. The pollster suggested that after tax reform the president could move on to budget restraint, catastrophic illness insurance, and welfare reform. This is tinkering. These are not big-

ticket issues, at least not the way the White House treats them now.

The prevailing view at the White House is that Reagan is fortunate that tax reform has lingered. It is a good-vibes issue, perfect for a summer of presidential happy talk and continued popularity. And it keeps Reagan from embracing issues with little political appeal. Then, in the fall, there are congressional elections, to which Reagan will devote much campaigning. More than any recent president, Reagan likes stumping for his party, and he is eager for Republicans to retain their tenuous control of the Senate. So that takes him to the closing weeks of the year, precisely when a summit meeting in Washington with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is a likely prospect. Notice there's no time along the way for Reagan to get cranked up on a fresh agenda with risk-taking initiatives—restricting abortions, cutting Social Security, you name it—that only a president as popular as Reagan might pull off.

The rule of thumb at the White House now is nothing ventured, nothing lost. Under this thinking, the president's popularity and bold decision-making are mutually exclusive. "His popularity's been put up on the mantelpiece to be admired," moans a dissenting White House official. "And woe to the person who says you should bring it down and use it." A conservative lobbyist on Capitol Hill has complained repeatedly to the White House that Wirthlin has boxed the president in. "Wirthlin's advice is always the same—don't take any risks," the lobbyist says. "If Reagan's popularity is down, then he shouldn't grab onto any controversial issues, but instead wait until his popularity is higher. If his popularity is already high, like right now, then the advice is that Reagan shouldn't get stuck with any issue that might drag it down." This would prevent the president from taking on any new issues at all, since his personal popularity is far higher than the popularity of practically any issue.

Reagan himself is part of the no-agenda problem. For all his ideological zeal, he has a passive streak. He doesn't like to take sides when his top aides are in sharp disagreement. For the umpteenth time in May, the White House heard a discussion about eliminating the executive order under which federal contractors are required to maintain minority hiring quotas. Bradford Reynolds, the Justice Department's civil rights chief, said recent Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action raised questions about the constitutionality of the order. Attorney General Edwin Meese, who wants the order lifted, agreed. Labor Secretary William Brock, who wants to preserve the order, didn't. Reagan did nothing at all. The argument will go on.

LIKE MOST politicians, Reagan is a popularizer, not an originator. He didn't invent supply-side economics, after all. He was merely persuaded to adopt the doctrine. Reagan is unusually susceptible to being swayed by his staff. "He's mindful of the advice he gets," says a se-

nior aide. In 1985 the majority opinion of White House officials was that the president should tread lightly on the issue of aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. He stayed off TV. In April of this year, he was given the opposite advice. Reagan went on TV with a strong appeal for *contra* aid. He lost the vote in the House. With a new vote coming in mid-June, Reagan is being pressured by most of his staff to go easy. Thus don't expect another high-visibility campaign on his part.

Conservatives at the White House have their own target for blame in all this. It's "the mice," the munchkins who work for Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff. Whenever an intriguing new idea is presented to them, their answer is a reflexive no. They trim the sharp conservative rhetoric from the president's speeches. They invariably want to compromise with, rather than fight, congressional Democrats. There's a bit of truth to the charges. Some of the mice favor a compromise on the protectionist trade bill that passed the House May 22, in spite of Reagan's free-trade talk. But so what if the mice are at fault? What else is new? Regan's mice are hardly a new phenomenon. Every White House is crammed full of cautious aides who warn ominously about the political devastation bold action will bring. In Reagan's first term, the mouse role was capably played by Michael Deaver and his underlings.

The difference in the second term is the general absence of officials running around with agendas they want Reagan to adopt. Also there are more mice. Still, an aide with ideas isn't always at the mercy of an aide with none. As luck would have it, there are two advisers with access to Reagan who have burning agendas. One is Patrick Buchanan, the White House communications chief. He is as relentless a conservative as his reputation suggests, and a lot more resourceful. Mitch Daniels, the White House political adviser, concluded recently that the GOP will hold the Senate but lose a minimum of ten seats in the House, enough to put Reagan legislation out of contention there. Buchanan can deal with this. He has a plan for skirting Congress altogether. How? By forgetting about legislation and emphasizing the action a president can take on his own—judicial appointments, executive orders, foreign policy initiatives, the use of the White House as a platform for conservative proselytizing.

THE OTHER GUY with an agenda is Meese. If you thought Meese's only concern was getting conservatives installed on the federal appeals bench, think again. He also runs the Cabinet council on domestic policy, and he's ordered major studies on federalism, welfare reform, and the family. All three reports are expected to make sweeping legislative recommendations, and they'll have one thing in common: insistence on a reduced role for the federal government. The timing of the reports is significant. They'll be finished late this year. Who knows? They may fill the agenda vacuum at the White House.

Of course the White House doesn't automatically abhor a vacuum. Last March a young Republican lobbyist named

David Smick urged a White House official to put hunger and poverty on Reagan's agenda. "Reagan's already done amazing things for most people, yet there's this growing underclass of forgotten Americans," Smick said. "The Reagan agenda hasn't dealt with them. It would be the biggest coup since the New Deal if Reagan closed the loop on his agenda by picking up the bottom 20 to 30 percent of the population." Before Smick had finished his spiel, the official was rustling in his chair and looking anxiously at his watch. Soon enough, Smick was ushered out the door. Odds are, the same thing would have happened in a six-year presidency.

FRED BARNES

Proposition 13 cuts deep.

CALIFORNIA SCREAMIN'

Sacramento

For most of the country, California's Proposition 13 has become a footnote to an era that's had a surfeit of talk about tax revolt and tax reform. But eight years and two political cycles later, it's clear that, for California, Jarvis-Gann wasn't a passing fad, but a conscious political decision, institutionalized by two governors and reconfirmed in every election since, to cut taxes, cap public spending, and curtail public services. As a result, California, which was once regarded as a leader among states in progressive government, public education, and social service, is now not much better than average.

Consider the numbers. In a decade California has dropped from sixth to 15th in per capita public spending, from 14th to 29th in spending per \$1,000 of personal income. It now spends less than the national average for each child in its public schools (it stands 26th in the nation, between Ohio and Texas), comes in 18th in per capita spending on health and hospitals, and is close to last in spending on *highways*. It has not started a major water project in more than a decade. When the legislature approved a three-billion-dollar state program a few years ago to deliver more water to southern California, it was soundly voted down in a statewide referendum. Despite a 20 percent population increase, California's 1986-87 state budget, in constant dollars, will be almost precisely what it was in 1980-81.

This was the state that a generation ago was described as a place of young upwardly mobile (pre-yuppie) families—a place of new schools and freeways, of high-tech aspirations and unlimited possibilities. In the early sixties, when California surpassed New York as the largest state in the nation, thousands of journalists came out to wonder at it, and to lavish the place with sunbaked hyperbole about the

future. California, wrote George Leonard for *Look* magazine in 1962, "presents the promise and challenge contained at the very heart of the American dream; here, probably more than at any other place, the shackles of the past are broken. In helping to create the society of the future, a man is limited only by the strength of his ambition, the dimension of his concern and the depth of his courage to face the dangers of his own creation."

Of course the reality never lived up to the myth, but of the millions of sun-starved people who moved to California in the past 75 years, enough believed it to demand that the state make every reasonable effort, and some not so reasonable, to make it come true: in schools, in parks, in freeways, in enormous water projects, and in the most diverse and accessible system of higher education ever created.

Much of it, to be sure, is still in place. The University of California, the flagship of that wonderful education system, is alive and well and being treated grandly by the governor and the taxpayers. And California is still more generous to its welfare recipients than any other state—thanks to cost-of-living provisions placed in state law as part of a deal between legislative Democrats and then-governor Ronald Reagan, who thought it would save money.

But the state's huge community-college system, once a national model for educational opportunity, is a shambles—highly politicized, without a clear mission, and with uncertain and (on some campuses) non-existent academic standards. Similarly, its public schools are overcrowded, underfunded, and in most measures of performance, just barely average. (California now has one of the highest high-school dropout rates, which climbed sharply when Prop. 13 forced the cancellation of nearly all summer school programs.) Both the community colleges and the elementary and secondary schools are the subjects of sweeping reform commission reports that have lain neglected since they were first submitted, one in early April, the other last November. It is New Jersey and Tennessee that are leading the education reform movement of the eighties, not California.

THE REASONS ARE not hard to find. Here again California prefigures the nation, in its massive demographic shift from an electorate of predominantly young voters with children—and hence presumably interested in schools, parks, playgrounds (all the things cut by Prop. 13)—to one increasingly dominated by older voters whose children are grown. Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, a pair of elderly curmudgeons themselves, weren't the first to discover that fact, but they were the first really to understand its political significance. In the Proposition 13 campaign in 1978, they described the state not as a place of young families but of retirees and aging taxpayers unable to pay their property tax bills. Proportionately there were far fewer people with children in school than there had been a generation before, and many of them were single parents and/or members of California's rapidly growing minority popula-

tions, and thus doubly underrepresented at the polls.

There was, of course, some fiscal truth in the Jarvis and Gann-created image (property taxes were exorbitant in some communities). But the gerontocratic politics they helped to create easily transcended the limited problem of high state property taxes. Just this spring, a large and very overcrowded suburban school district outside Sacramento prepared to float bonds to build new schools, which it badly needs. When some elderly people came in to protest that they wouldn't get anything out of new schools, the school board voted to exempt property owners over 65 from two-thirds of their share of the cost of amortizing the bonds. Nevertheless, when the matter went on the ballot in April, the elderly voted heavily against it, and it narrowly missed getting the necessary two-thirds vote.

THE TAX-CUT fever is gone, but unless there is some unexpected upheaval, no one will soon repeal Jarvis-Gann or undo its effects. It's not merely that Governor George Deukmejian, like Ronald Reagan, has steadfastly refused to grant any tax increases to bail out schools or local government, but that increased taxes are no longer an issue, even among liberal Democrats. So far almost no one has seriously proposed restoring to local governments the fiscal authority that Prop. 13 stripped from them, much less succeeded in doing it. Finally, and perhaps most significant, there is a Gann-sponsored measure in the state constitution that, in the next year or two, will cap public spending even if the money is available. The cap, an offspring of Prop. 13, was enacted as a ballot initiative in 1979. With certain exceptions, it limits increases in the state budget to increases in the consumer price index and population. The rest must be refunded to the taxpayers. Gann makes no provision for the growth or increasing complexity of the state's economy.

Gann passed in a time of high inflation, when nobody expected that to be a problem. But by 1983-84, as the state's economy recovered, the gap between real appropriations and the Gann cap began to shrink; it will disappear during the state's next fiscal year, which begins July 1. There are a great many technical uncertainties about its provisions and some marginal ways of stretching the limit. But sooner or later, Gann's constraints will set in. They already had a substantive effect in shaping this year's budget debates and will certainly have more in the future. It's not simply that the governor is telling the legislators and the school people that Gann prevents him from appropriating more money for schools, but that, for the most part, they accept that explanation.

So far hardly anyone has proposed the repeal of either Gann or Prop. 13. Both seem to be regarded as immutable—laws of nature, not of man. Of course, there has never been any real fiscal emergency, except maybe in the first months after Prop. 13 passed. But neither is there any pervasive sense of concern that California no longer provides the quality of public services that it did a decade ago. Meanwhile the schools—and of course, other public institutions and organizations—cater increasingly to the state's

growing minority population. (In the next few years, more than half the students in the state's public schools will come from minority groups.) In that respect, as in many others, California is becoming more like a Southern state.

Unless those minority groups develop political power proportionate to their numbers, it will be even less likely that California will either restore the level of public spending it once took for granted or recapture the unbridled optimism that encouraged that spending and so much else. On the contrary, it's much more likely that the state will be increasingly polarized between the special-interest politics of younger minority groups and the conservatism of an aging white population. That hardly bodes well for good public services or the sense of community that sustains them.

The general cooling of California is hardly an unmitigated disaster. The state can stand a little less of the old lurching between the ecstatic and the demonic. Jim Jones

has been forgotten. Patty Hearst now makes the women's pages as a wife and mother. And Charlie Manson makes periodic appearances before a parole board that will, one hopes, say no forever. Maybe there will be no burning of Los Angeles.

But something important is nonetheless being lost, and that loss is deeply regrettable, not only for California but for the country whose future California once was. Things better work here, John Didion said, "because here, beneath that immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent." It has all become less crazy, maybe even more mature. But in settling for average or just better than average, the state denies both itself and the country the sense of greater possibilities it so long represented.

PETER SCHRAG

Peter Schrag is associate editor of the *Sacramento Bee*.

The pathetic career of Reagan's juvenile justice chief.

AL REGNERY'S SECRET LIFE

BY MURRAY WAAS

UNTIL EARLY JUNE, Alfred Regnery was the administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the Reagan Justice Department. In this position Regnery has faithfully followed the president's policy of seeking to abolish the office. The office was established in 1975 with the goal of removing juvenile offenders from adult jails and prisons and deinstitutionalizing status offenders such as truants. At least 81,000 juveniles nationwide remain in such facilities, where they face violent attacks from older inmates and where they are at least eight times more likely to commit suicide than youths held in juvenile detention centers. Nevertheless, Regnery and his superiors say that the federal government needs to do nothing more. Congress, by overwhelming bipartisan majorities, has refused to abolish the office in each of the last five years. Regnery responded by doing the minimum necessary to comply with the congressional mandate. Instead he concentrated his office's efforts on right-wing pet causes such as school discipline and the administration's antipornography crusade.

Regnery abruptly resigned on May 21, saying he wants to return to his family's publishing business. The resignation was treated by both the administration and the press

Murray Waas, a Washington writer, wrote "Meese's Power Grab" in the May 19 issue.

as part of the usual comings and goings of administration personnel. Yet his decision caught his personal secretary, his press secretary, and his immediate superior in the Justice Department by surprise. He had speaking engagements lined up through June, and had spoken to me about his plans for the coming year, including developing programs for chronic juvenile offenders and funding more research on pornography. Regnery has been a controversial figure ever since he was appointed to the job in 1983. With more of his questionable personal and professional behavior coming to light, it seems more likely that Regnery was doing both himself and his colleagues a favor by bowing out quickly.

One of the most disturbing incidents occurred in 1976 and was never discussed in his confirmation hearings. In late October 1976 Regnery was winding up a campaign to become district attorney in Madison, Wisconsin. His wife had called the police three times in the weeks before the election to complain of obscene phone calls and vandalism. Regnery held a press conference to charge that his political opponents were using "Watergate-style tactics" to force him out of the race. When his wife called the police on the afternoon of October 31, 1976, the charge was much more serious. Christina Regnery, who was eight months pregnant, told police that two men broke into her home and warned her that her husband should drop out of the race

for district attorney. Then she said the two men had cut her with an embroidery knife and forced her to have oral sex.

The police investigation concluded that Christina Regnery had fabricated the entire incident—and Alfred Regnery told police that he too had “given serious thought” to that possibility. No neighbors had seen anything unusual, there was no sign of a forced entry in the Regnery house, and no sign of struggle. In addition, although Christina Regnery had 73 slash marks on her body, none was serious. “Not a single cut required a stitch or a Band-Aid,” said one law-enforcement official involved. The police report concluded that “the infliction of the wounds on Mrs. Regnery are still questionable and may have been self-inflicted or done by subjects known to her. There is no indication that any unknown subjects inflicted any of the injuries.” Regnery and the police agreed that they would “pursue the possibility of self-inflicted injuries.” The report also said that it was “decided at this time that Mr. Regnery would not disclose any of the circumstances surrounding the incident.”

Only minutes later, however, Regnery told a newspaper reporter in the hospital corridor, according to the police report, “that his wife had been raped by a white male and a black male and had been stabbed. . . . The wounds had been stitched.” Of course, his wife had never alleged that she was raped, she was clearly not the victim of a stabbing, and she had not required any stitches. But Regnery’s false claims were useful to his campaign. The headline in the Madison paper, “Two Attack Wife of D.A. Candidate,” seemed to substantiate Regnery’s earlier charges. Nevertheless, Regnery lost the election.

BUT THIS WAS not all the police investigation uncovered. When police searched Regnery’s home, shortly after the alleged assault, they found a cache of pornography, including “several catalogues for various prophylactic devices and erotica.” The police also reported finding “a book with numerous color photos of various sexual gratification, including oral sex and the placing of objects into the vagina,” a German sex magazine, and a copy of *Penthouse*.

Seven years later, in mid-1983, Edwin Meese asked Regnery to informally head the administration’s anti-pornography campaign. The President’s Commission on Pornography, whose report is due out soon, was set up with the help of a \$125,000 grant provided by Regnery’s Office of Juvenile Justice.

Regnery denies that he is hypocritical on the pornography issue. At first he claimed that the police report detailing the discovery of numerous catalogs and magazines was “a fabrication.” He said he only had “a copy of *Playboy* or something like that.” Then he said, “I think a friend of mine in Germany sent me one magazine and I had it around.” When asked about all the items on the police report, he conceded: “I probably had a little [pornography] around the house, like I bet lots of people do.” But Regnery denied that he was a consumer of pornography. “I wasn’t then and I never have been. I don’t use and I don’t enjoy it.”

This was not the last time Regnery’s personal behavior raised questions about his public career. The day after Regnery’s first child was born, a Madison pediatrician named William Ylitalo was called in to treat the baby for a medical emergency. Ylitalo, citing doctor-patient confidentiality, has never specified exactly what occurred at the hospital. But the doctor came away convinced Regnery was emotionally unstable. He did say that Regnery had showed anger and hostility toward him and the hospital staff. Dr. Ylitalo was so distressed by the incident that in 1983 he sent a private letter to three U.S. senators recommending that they vote not to confirm Regnery as administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice. “The appointee to this post should be a person who has integrity and is emotionally stable rather than someone whose moral honesty is questionable,” he wrote. Regnery says Ylitalo is a “liar.”

Dr. Ylitalo’s letter compounded the controversy about Regnery’s nomination. Regnery was well connected but inexperienced. The son of Henry Regnery, the conservative publisher, he had been a college director of the Young Americans for Freedom, a Senate aide, and had served for a year in the Lands Division of the Reagan Justice Department. But he had never held a job remotely related to juvenile justice, and drove around town with a bumper sticker on his car that asked, “Have you slugged your kid today?” His explanation during his Senate confirmation hearings was, “I try to keep a sense of humor about the things I do.”

During those hearings Senator Howard Metzenbaum asked Regnery, “What have you done with respect to juvenile justice matters as far as studying the issues?” This is the exchange that followed:

Regnery: I have done considerable reading and other study on the juvenile courts system.

Metzenbaum: Tell us some of the works you have read concerning juvenile justice.

Regnery: I guess I cannot give you a list of them off the top of my head.

Metzenbaum: Can you give us any?

Regnery: Well, they are in my office. I cannot think of the titles and the authors, but they are either in my office or my home. I have read quite a number. I have also studied the issue of juvenile courts. I have studied the issue of juvenile corrections.

Metzenbaum: How did you study the issue of juvenile courts?

Regnery: Reading.

Metzenbaum: What did you read?

Regnery: Various books and articles.

Metzenbaum: What books?

Regnery: I will have to give them to you. I cannot remember all the titles of all the books I have read, Senator.

IN OFFICE Regnery devoted himself to issues that had little to do with juvenile justice. He was criticized by Republicans and Democrats alike for awarding a \$186,710 grant to a dean at Jerry Falwell’s Liberty College for the purpose of designing a high-school course on the Constitution. He drew even more bipartisan criticism when he awarded \$789,000 to Judith Reisman, a former songwriter for the “Captain Kangaroo” show, to do

a study of cartoons in *Penthouse*, *Playboy*, and *Hustler*.

Reisman had been recommended to Regnery by his chief deputy, James Wooton, who was impressed by Reisman's allegations that Dr. Alfred Kinsey, the renowned pioneer sex researcher of the 1940s, had gotten all of his data on child sexuality from "a 63-year-old man who had sex with over 800 children." Wooton arranged for Reisman to meet Regnery. This meeting led to Reisman's getting the grant.

Reisman later stated in a memo found in Regnery's files that she had been given the money in part "to conclude research on the Kinsey data on child sexuality." Regnery now denies this. "As far as I know," Regnery told me, "I don't think any of our money is going for that Kinsey stuff." Reisman did not return my phone calls.

Regnery now concedes that "the grant was for too much money," suggesting it could have been done for around \$600,000. He blames the mistake on "bad advice" from his staff. In fact, Regnery's research director, Pamela Swain, had told him the project could be done for between \$20,000 and \$60,000, and another official wrote a memo to Regnery saying Reisman's proposal was "very skimpy . . . very broad for a minor statutory area" and "a natural for competition." The next day, Regnery awarded the noncompetitive grant to Reisman.

THE MOST extraordinary example of Regnery's practice of doling out grants for political purposes was a \$4.25 million grant given in January 1984 to set up a National School Safety Center at Pepperdine University in California. The grant recipient was a close friend and political associate of Meese named George Nicholson, who had lost a bid to become attorney general of California in November 1982.

The fact that Nicholson, who had no previous affiliation with Pepperdine, received a noncompetitive grant just two months after losing the election attracted some attention on Capitol Hill. But Regnery assured a House subcommittee in April 1984 that there was nothing irregular about the grant. He repeatedly said that the administration had selected Pepperdine to sponsor the center, and that Pepperdine had in turn selected Nicholson. Both Regnery and Nicholson denied that Nicholson's friendship with Meese was instrumental in the awarding of the grant.

Yet memos in Regnery's own files show that he misled Congress. The administration privately agreed to give Nicholson the \$4.2 million well before Pepperdine was involved. And they gave him the grant as part of a larger public relations effort by the White House to protect the president on a sensitive issue.

The issue was education. In late 1983 White House pollster Richard Wirthlin found that the American people disapproved of the administration's massive cuts in federal education spending by a margin of two to one. White House deputy counsel Michael Deaver was called on to mount a public relations campaign. If the administration wasn't going to change its policies, it could change the public's perceptions.

At the time Regnery was working with Gary Bauer, assistant secretary of education, on a report titled "Chaos in the Public Schools," an exaggerated portrait of mayhem in the classroom. For example, Regnery and Bauer asserted that there had been 2,400 cases of arson in public schools in the previous year. They neglected to mention, though, that the figure came from a National Institute of Education study that found the arson incidents cost an average of 39 cents each. In general, the report vastly overstated the problem of school violence. Democratic representative Pat Williams, who chairs the House Select Subcommittee on Education, pointed out that "students are from between four to eight times safer, depending on which major crime you are talking about, in schools than they are in their own homes."

But the school violence theme was both emotionally powerful and politically versatile. Bauer, an ally of the religious right, was hoping to whip up public support for tuition tax credits. The Justice Department was hoping outrage at school violence could be used to weaken civil rights law. Roger Clegg, head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Policy, wrote a memo to Lowell Jensen, another top Justice Department official, proposing the administration claim that civil rights laws undermined school discipline by allowing students to sue school authorities. He suggested that the school discipline issue could be the pretext for introducing legislation to give legal immunity from civil rights legislation, not just to school officials, but to all public officials. And of course, Michael Deaver and the White House staff were delighted with an issue that could be used to divert public attention from the president's unpopular education spending cuts.

IN A MEMO dated November 15, 1983, Regnery urged the White House to schedule a televised presidential fireside chat about the importance of discipline in the nation's public schools. Two weeks later Regnery wrote a memo to then-attorney general William French Smith, stating that the White House "expressed considerable interest in the proposal," and that he planned to give \$4.2 million to Nicholson. "We plan to fund a school safety resource center. . . . George Nicholson, the Republican candidate for Attorney General of California in 1982 . . . has tentatively agreed to assist us in this endeavor." The memo never mentioned Pepperdine. Whether Meese had anything to do with this tentative agreement is still not known.

In December 1983 the president embarked on an excellence in education campaign, and the "Chaos in the Public Schools" report was released to reinforce this blitz. On January 9, 1984, Reagan devoted his nationwide radio address to school discipline, and announced that Nicholson had been awarded a grant to establish the National School Safety Center. The irony was that Nicholson had not yet applied for the grant. On January 11, 1984, Nicholson finally submitted a formal proposal for the \$4.2 million grant that the president had awarded him two days earlier!

Within a year and a half it became clear that Regnery and his superiors had been far more concerned about scoring public relations points than about actually establishing

a worthwhile institution. Regnery's staff had been skeptical from the start that Nicholson was competent to run the School Safety Center. During Nicholson's tenure as director of the California District Attorneys Association in the late 1970s, the group almost went bankrupt. Regnery says he knew of allegations of Nicholson's mismanagement as director of the association when considering the School Safety Center grant, but approved the proposal anyway. Last summer, after hearing numerous complaints about

Nicholson's administrative practices, officials at Pepperdine ordered him to go on paid leave and then demoted him.

Regnery says that he is leaving the Justice Department because he has accomplished most of what he set out to do. "We redirected the way the whole criminal justice system regards juvenile crime," Regnery told the conservative *Washington Times*. "We put together some programs and research that will have, over time, a significant impact for the better."

Get ready for the most revolting display of glitz in this country's history.

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCTION

BY JACOB WEISBERG

RESIDENTS OF Red Hook, Brooklyn, are furious about Lee Iacocca's plans to rededicate the Statue of Liberty during the weekend of July 4. They are among the monument's nearest neighbors, and have contributed to its renovation. But Iacocca hasn't invited them to attend his party on Governor's Island, which will afford the best view of the relighting ceremony on the evening of July 3, or to his fireworks display on the Fourth. More generally, they don't like the fact that the symbol of American democracy is becoming the property of politicians, celebrities, and corporate bigwigs who are paying \$5,000 for tickets to the unveiling. "You have to have money in the bank or your picture in the paper to love liberty," Red Hook resident John Hojnacki told Denis Hamill of *Newsday*, who recently wrote an outraged column about the planned celebration.

It may or may not make the Brooklynites feel better to know that their exclusion serves the historical record faithfully. At the statue's original unveiling, on October 28, 1886, President Grover Cleveland, sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, and luminaries of New York society attended the major social event of the season, while the working people who sent their quarters to Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* to help buy a base for the statue swarmed around the shore trying to catch a peek. At least the big shots of a century ago were paying their own money. The corporate honchos who are buying expensive tickets and chartering boats for the best views of the centennial whiz-bang are billing it to the shareholders and the taxpayers. On the other hand, today's commoners can watch the shenanigans on ABC, which is paying ten million dollars for the broadcast rights.

The disenfranchised should also be consoled by the knowledge that this July Fourth weekend is likely to be remembered as the most revolting display of patriotic glitz and tacky pageantry in this country's history. The celebra-

tion, which is being assembled by television producer David Wolper, promises to duplicate the most nauseating elements of the 1976 bicentennial, which he worked on, and the 1984 Summer Olympics, which he produced. You may not have heard of Wolper, but you've probably seen one of his miniseries, including "Roots," "The Thorn Birds," and most recently, "North and South," which prompted the *Washington Post's* television critic, Tom Shales, to call Wolper "a man with no more taste than a June bug."

Wolper says his celebration will be tasteful and, above all, historically accurate. Sitting at his desk in the makeshift Park Avenue office of "Liberty Weekend," Wolper described his plans: President Reagan presents an award called the "Medal of Liberty" to 12 naturalized citizens, including Bob Hope and Henry Kissinger (whose profession is given as "statesman"). Meanwhile, on Ellis Island, Chief Justice Warren Burger swears in 2,000 new citizens, as 38,000 others take the oath by video hookup. All 40,000 immigrants spontaneously begin singing "America the Beautiful," and an enormous choir and orchestra join in. Reagan pushes a magic button that illuminates the statue piece by piece. Elizabeth Taylor and Gregory Peck speak on immigration as part of a "show-biz salute to the statue." Mikhail Baryshnikov dances to music by George Gershwin. Neil Diamond and Kenny Rogers sing, tall ships float by, fireworks explode, doves and balloons are released, and cannon shots echo in the air as part of a "sound and light show honoring the 50 states."

That's for starters. Then the winner of Wolper's Christa McAuliffe Statue of Liberty Student Essay Contest reads his or her poem or essay. Why Christa? "She was killed the day I announced the contest," Wolper said. "So I renamed it on that day in her honor. We were giving an award to children and they were coming with

their teachers. I said, what could be more perfect?"

Wolper is pulling out all the stops to produce the following effects: "tears—goose bumps and tears. People will be sobbing so much they will hardly be able to control themselves," he said. A few goose-bump-inducing props Wolper wanted weren't attainable. He had to abandon his plan to hold the party aboard the aircraft carrier *USS John F. Kennedy*, which presented too many logistical problems, and Philadelphia refused to let him borrow the Liberty Bell, since its crack might widen if Reagan rang it.

Sam Goldwyn, who founded MGM Studios, once described his cinematic ideal as "a movie that begins with an earthquake and works its way up to a climax." Wolper's ambitions testify to a similar megalomania. After the opening ceremonies, he has ordered a parade of tall ships, "the grandest fireworks display in American history," an "Americana concert" with Barry Manilow, Johnny Cash, and John Denver, and an academic conference titled "Liberty—The next 100 years." ("This lively gathering of distinguished individuals will provide a unique perspective that promises to be stimulating as well as unpredictable.") And all of that hoopla merely warms up the audience for the closing ceremonies on Sunday, July 6, which Wolper says will be "one of the most spectacular nights in a person's lifetime." "Never," he adds, "will you see so many people on a field singing and dancing and fireworks and lighting and lasers and stars."

The Sunday festivities start with a "Sports Salute to the Statue," featuring the gymnastics gold medalist Mary Lou Retton, ice skaters Peggy Fleming and Dorothy Hamill, a basketball matchup of the Harlem Globetrotters and the NBA all-stars, and an NFL tug-of-war. At 8 p.m. the locus shifts to Giants Stadium for the big blowout. Wolper hopes to combine the excesses he achieved in the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1984 Olympics. You remember the closing ceremony: flying saucers, red and blue smoke, seven-foot rat-headed extraterrestrials, munchkin break dancers, and Lionel Richie singing "All Night Long," with Peter Jennings intoning: "Do you believe this? . . . Still a prelude to what is coming . . . the biggest ever by far . . . the most important thing is not to triumph but to struggle. . . ."

WOLPER WAS criticized for turning the Los Angeles Olympics, supposedly an international occasion, into a patriotic pep rally. This time the gloves will be off. A cast of 20,000 in red, white, and blue suits (including 1,000 fiddlers, 1,000 guitarists, 1,000 tap dancers, and so on) will make formations, on the field and the 20-tiered stage, of enormous flags and words like "Freedom" and "Liberty." Not to mention waterfalls, lasers, card stunts, and more fireworks. Frank Sinatra, Willie Nelson, and Liza Minnelli will sing as part of a program of different kinds of music saluting the statue. ("Country-and-Western Salutes the Lady"? "Easy Listening Salutes the Lady"?) But Wolper has been unable to get Bruce Springsteen, who continues to refuse to be co-opted by Iacocca. (He was offered \$12

million for the use of three seconds of his song "Born in the USA" in a Chrysler commercial.) And tickets for the grand finale, priced from \$25 to \$200, aren't selling very well, even though they're 60 percent tax-deductible.

"Hopefully people ask me to do these things because I have some taste and won't hire a Statue of Liberty look-alike contest," Wolper said. "I've had thousands of offers—from a guy walking on a high wire from the torch of the Statue of Liberty to Ellis Island, to people from Hawaii who want to put a lei around the statue from a helicopter, to people jumping from the torch with parachutes." He's proud of having said no to these carnival acts. But what Wolper is actually preserving is not dignity so much as solemnity, and a mock solemnity at that. Wolper insists, "There won't be anything commercial about it." Certainly not the 22-karat gold-accented, leather-bound edition of his commemorative book, *A Celebration of Freedom—Liberty Weekend 1986*, available by mail for \$49.95 (for a limited time only).

NOT ALL OF Wolper's coproducers share his professed loathing for commercialization. "You've got to be commercial," says William Fugazy. "You've got to get on TV if you're gonna sell." Fugazy is a New York travel agent whom Governor Mario Cuomo appointed to chair the New York State Statue of Liberty Centennial Commission. True to his opinion, he is asking retailers to commercialize the Statue of Liberty: "Have your local shopping mall, merchant association, or major area department store become involved by creating a 'Statue of Liberty' theme for a given period of time. Banners, mini-replicas of the statue, and even fashion shows can be used to decorate the store's or mall's interior and create new excitement for customers." That's from Fugazy's brochure.

Fugazy is working with Wolper, and is also planning several of his own fund-raising events. Waiting in the reception area of his Fifth Avenue office, I eavesdropped on one of Fugazy's assistants who was planning an event called "Rock for Liberty," which may or may not materialize: "Yeah, Loverboy canceled out. Eh—they weren't such a great act anyway. No, we haven't been able to get Bruce. Before we get on the horn with any other talent, let's see if Eddie Van Halen is available."

When an assistant finally ushered me into Fugazy's office, he told me about his biggest event: an "ecumenical Mass" and bell-ringing ceremony that will take place on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral at "high noon" on July 3, starring his eminence Archbishop O'Connor. Fugazy is also working on "a very ecumenical luncheon" at the Waldorf-Astoria honoring Bob and Dolores Hope, to which he is inviting all living former presidents. "Remember, that's Bob *and* Dolores," he adds emphatically. "To honor Bob *and* Dolores's work for freedom." And Fugazy is planning a VIP cruise on July 2 in honor of Iacocca. "We're getting Vic Damone," Fugazy said. (He seems to be getting Vic Damone for all his events.) "It's going to be a little moment of saying thank-you, Lee, for everything you did."

Fugazy's pretty excited about the restoration. "She's

gonna be beautiful. I don't believe all that stuff about how the workmen were urinating on her," he said. "She's got a beautiful green pâté all over her."

Fugazy's events are supposed to raise funds for the statue's restoration, despite the fact that it is fully paid for and nearly completed. Tickets for the very ecumenical Bob Hope luncheon cost \$150 each, and if Fugazy fills 1,000 seats at the Waldorf, the event may gross \$150,000. But most of that will go to expenses. "You should see what it costs to get invitations printed," Fugazy says. The tickets are, of course, tax-deductible, so even if the luncheon earns a few thousand, taxpayers will be out \$75,000. In other words, taxpayers underwrite Fugazy's fund-raiser with Bob and Dolores, which won't raise much money for a restoration job that is already paid for, and that the government wasn't supposed to underwrite in the first place.

But Fugazy and Wolper are merely pouring gasoline on the bonfire of hype that Lee Iacocca started. The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, which Iacocca chairs, concocted the scheme (modeled on the 1984 Olympics) to franchise the Liberty logo. Corporations use tie-ins, known in the business as "cause-related marketing," to make a bundle. American Express, for example, boosted its sales 28 percent by promising a penny to the restoration each time customers used their charge cards. This earned \$1.7 million for the repair job, and much more for American Express. On top of their tax-deductible bragging about these tax-deductible contributions, the efforts of some companies to associate the statue with their products and services in the public's mind have become laughable.

"Just like Lady Liberty, smokeless tobaccos such as Copenhagen have also played a major role in shaping America's heritage." That's from U.S. Tobacco, the biggest backer of the restoration at ten million dollars. Perhaps the company is referring to a comment Bartholdi made during his 1871 visit, that America was like "an adorable woman chewing tobacco." Avon is depicting the restoration as a

"monumental makeover" and marketing a line of "Liberty Look" makeup. And Allied Van Lines has set up "Move to Liberty" exhibitions at shopping malls across the country, which depict the immigrant experience as "moving."

Plenty of people are cashing in without even cutting Iacocca in. Dozens of magazines, including *Newsweek* and *Popular Mechanics*, are publishing special issues with higher cover prices and increased advertising rates. Tapping the Liberty hype without rendering unto Iacocca is a dangerous game. Any company can use Lady Liberty in its advertising; the statue is in the public domain. But if you

use anything that resembles the official logo, or associate yourself too closely with the restoration, you're likely to wind up in court. The foundation sued Budweiser for airing a "This Bud's for You" commercial showing work on the monument without shelling out several million dollars first.

Iacocca is now going after small fry with official souvenirs. You can now get official Statue of Liberty porcelain dolls, charcoal briquettes, jigsaw puzzles, pocket knives, dry-roasted peanuts, and "Women's Bend Over trousers made of 100 percent polyester." There are also Nestlé chocolate statues, and even a Liberty Edition Harley Davidson motorcycle, which costs \$10,200. All of this official

schlock is supposed to raise another \$20 million.

Cheryl Peralta of Hamilton Projects, which the foundation has designated the official licensor of liberty souvenirs, says her firm's criteria "include appropriateness, dignity, good taste, creativity, quality, and 'made in the U.S.A.'" So dog food, ammunition, whips, pornography, and caskets, which could have brought in even more money, were rejected. But this is hairsplitting. Is Statue of Liberty dog food more offensive than Statue of Liberty chewing tobacco?

Meanwhile, the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation is grinding scrap from the restoration and processing it into jewelry, paperweights, and little model Statues of Liberty priced from ten dollars to \$300, with certificates of authenticity signed by Iacocca. A Florida real estate devel-



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

oper named John Stocks has founded a company called Gold Leaf Corporation to handle this lucrative contract, which is supposed to generate another \$12 million for the restoration. Stocks himself just signed an exclusive contract with Sears to distribute his "Authentic Materials" line of the decayed bolts and corroded copper.

Foundation president William May calls Iacocca "a folk hero" who can raise whatever he wants. There doesn't seem to be any danger that he'll stop soon. His original goal of \$230 million was arrived at, according to an article in the *Nation*, when Iacocca declared, "Let's get a dollar for every American" at a foundation meeting. When that \$230 million came into sight, Iacocca arbitrarily raised the goal to \$265 million. The coffers now hold \$252 million, but never

fear. Iacocca recently told Martin Gottlieb of the *New York Times* that his *personal* goal has always been \$400 million. Fund-raising and management costs alone have already eaten up more than \$40 million.

Even though the major restoration work is done, the fund-raising campaign continues to solicit money with the plea "Keep the Torch Lit." You'd never know that Liberty's face-lift cost only \$31 million. The foundation managed to spend an additional \$35 million for grounds work on Liberty Island. The rest of the money will go to the restoration of nearby Ellis Island. Iacocca wants to develop an "ethnic Williamsburg" theme park, with lots of pizza, gyros, and burritos, as well as ethnic crafts, dancing, and exhibits. The Park Service favors a self-supporting inter-

COMING ATTRACTIONS

On September 17, 1987, America will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its Constitution. The federal government has set up a Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, whose job is to promote and coordinate the festivities. But some of those who have worked with the commission predict a repeat of the vacuous fanfare inflicted on Americans in 1976. The good news is that 1987 probably won't be as polluted as 1976 or this year's Statue of Liberty centennial. The bad news is, that's not saying much.

The commission got off to an unfortunate start, and gave a taste of what we're in for, with the ringing proclamation that "Americans, by their very nature, revere the Constitution and place it in the category of hollowed writings [sic]." Commission staff members say they are determined to avoid excesses of publicity and commercialization. But the commission's low-key role seems to be due more to bureaucratic inertia than to choice. Staff director Mark Cannon wasn't appointed until August 1985, a month after the commissioners were named. The 1976 panel had been given ten years to prepare; Cannon had two.

After Congress finally passed the authorizing legislation in September 1983, the White House did nothing for 21 months. The official explanation is that all of those who applied to serve on the commission had to be checked carefully for security reasons.

But congressional aides confirm the story told by former assistant attorney general Theodore B. Olson: the bill's sponsors wanted members of Congress to serve on the commission, but the White House felt this would violate the separation of powers.

The commission staff says it was swamped with applicants. Yet the final selections suggest that their backgrounds were checked more for ideological purity than for "scholarship, a strong sense of public service, and expertise in the learned professions," as specified by Congress. President Reagan wangled political sympathizers for five of the eight seats at his disposal, including Phyllis Schlafly, who is well known for her eccentric views of the Constitution, and the Reverend Edward Victor Hill, who sits on the board of directors of the National Institute of Biblical Inerrancy.

One person who could have used a more thorough background check was former senator Roger Jepsen of Iowa, who was appointed acting staff director of the commission on January 3, 1985, the same day he left the Senate after a losing reelection campaign in which he conceded that "in a moment of weakness" he had patronized a Des Moines spa featuring "nude encounters." Jepsen and his administrative assistant, Donald Johnson, promptly appeared on the Justice Department payroll at salaries of \$70,500 and \$67,940, respectively. Jepsen certainly had a novel view of constitutional issues. In 1983, after being cited for driving alone in the car-pool lane of a Virginia expressway, he pleaded senatorial immunity and told his constituents, "It's perfectly legal. I drive my American-made car to work as pro-

vided for in the Constitution."

Jepsen became such an embarrassment that he was eased offstage at the urging of Chief Justice Warren Burger, who was subsequently named to the chair. Having previously eschewed all forms of publicity, Burger has become obsessed by the idea of presiding over the bicentennial of the Constitution. He suddenly began holding press conferences. He drops constitutional clichés in speeches and interviews, emphasizing his belief that the document was "divinely inspired." Conveniently, much of the divinity seems to have rubbed off on Burger, since in addition to chairing the federal panel, he shares the Constitution's birthday and will turn 80 on the date of the bicentennial. Admirers in the press have virtually canonized him. Jane Nevins wrote a particularly stomach-wrenching paean last year in the *New York Times Magazine*. "Justice Burger," she gushed in a magnificent slip, "is on a roll."

Or on his buns, one might say, considering what the commission has to show for itself thus far. Before its last meeting in April, ten months after its inception, the commission had endorsed only two projects: a collection of commemorative medals and a San Diego bicentennial chapter, which wants to hold a ten-kilometer run based on the theme "Exercise Your Constitutional Rights and Responsibilities." Only two other projects had received the next best thing, a letter of encouragement. The commission's stated reason for reserving its endorsement is not that most projects lack substance but that they haven't yet raised enough cash. Several sources close to the commission attri-

national conference center open during the tourist off-season. But Iacocca has criticized that idea. Apparently believing that he, not the federal government, owns the island, Iacocca said he wouldn't "just turn it over to the Park Service to spend as they please." The \$200 million that is left over is more than enough to pay for whatever plan the Interior Department selects.

The extra money Iacocca has raised is costing taxpayers a bundle, since it's all tax-deductible. The Treasury is out far more revenue thanks to Iacocca's campaign than if it had simply written a check for the \$66 million cost of restoring the statue and Liberty Island. And that's not the only way the government has paid. Despite the foundation's pledge that "there will be no government funding contribution,"

Iacocca has asked for and gotten the federal bailout once again. The Treasury is now selling minted Statue of Liberty coins in gold and silver to benefit the foundation. These medallions have already raised about \$28 million, and will bring in more than \$45 million if they sell out. That makes the coins the most profitable souvenirs, as well as the most tasteful.

But good taste isn't the point. Even the crassest trinkets have their charms. Someone who buys an ashtray with an American flag on it is still waving the flag. But there's no honest patriotism behind the production of this year's centennial and its associated paraphernalia. To corporations, the Statue of Liberty restoration is merely another opportunity to promote themselves and cash in. And that's what's really tacky. □

bute this odd rule to the cautious Burger. They cite endless internal squabbling over the solvency of various private projects and whether to bless them with the logo. A review of the minutes suggests that much if not most of the commission's time is consumed by such deliberations.

The American Bar Association has organized several worthy educational projects but hasn't applied for official recognition, partly because the rule about demonstrating financial support makes such a request futile. Like a good soldier, the ABA went to private sources to seek funding. One corporation courted by the ABA subsequently received a phone call from Burger asking for contributions to the commission. Unwilling to turn down Burger while supporting the ABA, the company suspended consideration of both requests.

Meanwhile, at a poorly attended "networking conference" in March for federal agencies and trade associations, commission representatives distributed an essay by President Reagan, reprinted from *Parade* magazine. "Although our Constitution is almost 200 years old," Reagan observed, "America has the vitality of strapping young men and vibrant young women." Another handout was a "Suggested Article for Trade Publications." The Constitution, it began, "is a history of personal meaning for every American citizen. It is as intimate as the air we breathe." This terse, informative essay went on in the same vein for three pages. Finally, there was a list of "Suggested Projects You Could Implement or Co-sponsor" including "Print & distribute 'We the People' bumper stickers," "Develop and equip

roving bicentennial historical vans," "Rededicate streets to Constitution Avenue," etc., "Bicentennial sporting events," and "Paint fireplugs to likeness of founders." In a May 7 hearing, Cannon (salary: \$86,000) proudly informed the Senate Appropriations Committee that South Bend, Indiana, had already founderized its hydrants.

Operations like this one that attempt to be serious are bound to be overcome by the desire for maximum hype. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, for example, "is aiming to reach the widest audience possible," Cannon reported in his recent testimony. Accordingly, in addition to "scholarly conferences" (which would probably be quite worthwhile), it is organizing "horse shows and garden club tours." The Airline Pilots Association, says Cannon, "is considering making flight announcements to passengers concerning the bicentennial." Better yet, consumers will soon be blessed with "telephone books featuring constitutional themes and containing removable copies of the Constitution."

At a meeting last December, according to a National Archives memo, a NASA representative "suggested that her agency might like to borrow a page of the Constitution to send up in the space shuttle." Shortly thereafter a commission staffer called the National Archives to request 100 copies of their Constitution poster to carry aboard the shuttle. "Upon return, the posters were to be signed by all the astronauts and given to the governors of the 50 states and other dignitaries." Unfortunately, the posters turned out to be too heavy, and the idea never got off the ground. The Daughters of

the American Revolution is also getting into the act. "For the coming observance," says a report, "the DAR has designed a logo as well as a special pin and a bonbon dish."

It's not that symbolic tributes, however tacky, are utterly without merit. What galls many historians is the attention given to ceremony as opposed to substance. While artists labor to amuse canines with hydrant reproductions of Paul Revere, the high-acid paper on which our founding documents are written decomposes in the National Archives. President Reagan extols the Founding Fathers (comparing them, for example, to his beloved *contras*), but for the last six years running he has sought to kill the already inadequate four-million-dollar budget of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, whose job it is to tend the papers of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and others.

A few organizations have taken it upon themselves to sponsor worthwhile activities. Philadelphia's We The People—200 Committee, for example, with the help of communities in the area, has put together an impressive schedule of educational events. Project '87, a bicentennial group run by scholars, has been preparing materials to generate serious reflection on the wisdom of the Constitution.

But bicentennial fire hydrants look to be the main order of the day. And already there is talk of a 1992 commission to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the landing of Columbus.

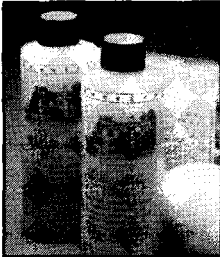
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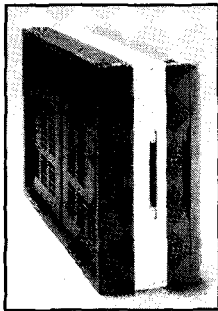
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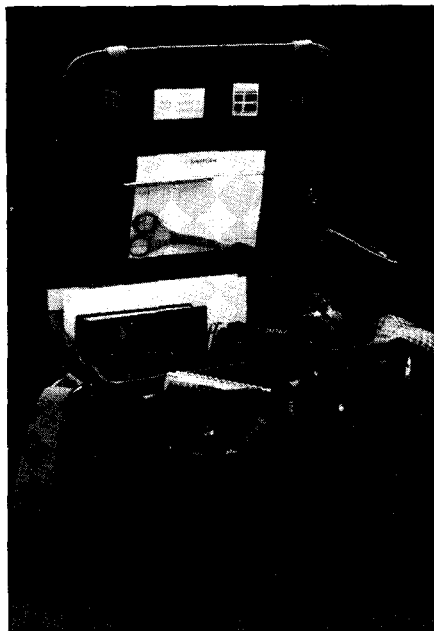


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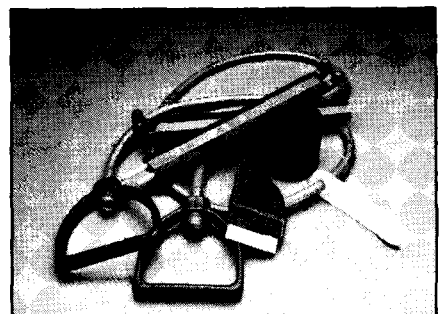
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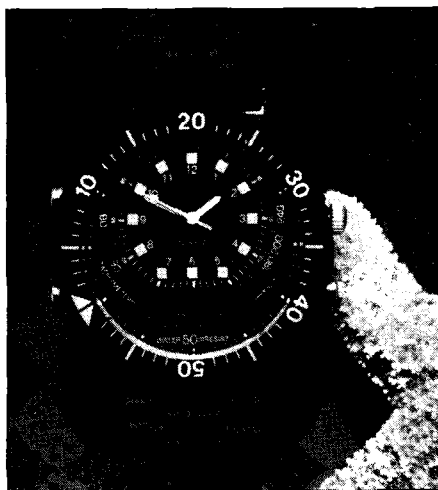
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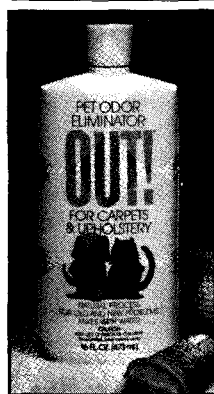
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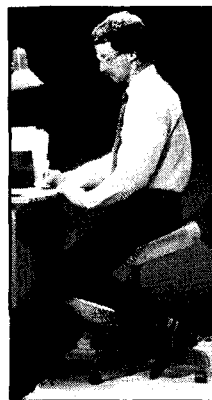
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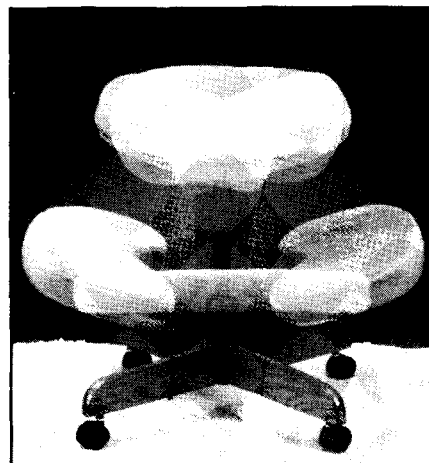


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BOOKS AND THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

'Go Ahead. Make My Hour.'

That line isn't actually in Sylvester Stallone's new film, but it might as well be. *Cobra* is about a Dirtier Harry with a revved-up rate of violence. The title is the nickname of a Los Angeles detective, a key member of the Zombie Squad—apparently something like a SWAT Team. Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry films began to look quaint after last

Cobra
(Warner Bros.)

Mona Lisa
(Island Pictures)

year's *To Live and Die in L.A.* Now Stallone's Magnum opus makes last year's picture look almost pastoral. In a mere 85 minutes, *Cobra* pours on many of the action gimmicks that were in the *L.A.* film—a wild car chase, men set on fire—plus a cascade of stabbings, hackings, and shootings topped by an impaling on a giant hook. Clearly Stallone, who wrote his own script from a novel by Paula Gosling, first plotted the action sequences, then filled the spaces in between with enough story to let the audience almost catch its breath.

Once, quite a while ago, I had lunch with Graham Greene, and during our talk he deplored most Westerns as embodiments of lynch law. I thought of Greene during *Cobra*. The Western has of course become the Urban. The lone rider who took vengeance into his own hands has evolved into the detective who disregards the rules. Lynch law, in *Cobra* and its antecedents, is now perpetrated by men with badges. Oh, once again the proprieties get ritual obeisance—the routine scene in the commissioner's office in which *Cobra* is warned he's going too far, the "square" detective who tells *Cobra* he's sicker than the criminals he's hunting. But, as usual, these scenes imply that legal procedures are dumb and pointless. In fact, at the finish, the official who had earlier berated *Cobra* congratulates him on the job he's done. The

very last line on the screen, after the closing credit crawl, is: "Patrons are warned not to imitate any of the stunts and action in this film." Patrons are not warned against mind-warping on the subjects of crime, police, and law.

Similarity to the recent *Rambo* is not accidental: Stallone doesn't get the chance to flash his gleaming pecs, but he is once again the misunderstood righter of wrongs, and part of his crusade is against hobbling officialdom. But *Cobra* is different in some ways from the previous picture. The hero actually gets injured once—at least to the extent that, after one horrific encounter, he wears a tiny Band-Aid on his temple. Stallone gives himself some touches of humor, including banter with a potential girlfriend. (There was a girl, briefly, in *Rambo* but no girlfriend.) He also makes a small self-referential joke. The hero's name, from which *Cobra* derives, is Marion Cobretti, an Italian surname and a "sissy" first name.

Cobra has another element in common with the Dirty Harry films and with *To Live and Die in L.A.* All are supposed to be anticrime, but in all of them the chief enemies are psychotic killers. (Andrew Robinson, who played the psychotic killer in *Dirty Harry*, is the "square" detective in *Cobra*.) If forensic medicine still means anything at all, a psychotic killer is not a criminal responsible for his acts. *Cobra* opens with a close-up of an automatic pistol turning our way while Stallone's voice quotes national statistics on crime. But the plot doesn't deal with the sorts of people responsible for the bulk of those figures. The film opens with a crazy man killing people at random in a supermarket. We have all read about such episodes; they are cases of insanity, not immorality. Then the script moves into fantasy, straight out of Steven Spielberg. *Cobra*'s main opponents are a gang of maniacal believers in some cooked-up creed who hold secret meetings and clash axes together over their heads while they chant something or

other. Again, though such ritual sadists certainly exist, this gang has much more to do with pathology than with moral corruption. But this gang provides the targets and sorties that Detective *Cobra* needs. When the killers, armed and mounted on motorcycles, ride past the motel where he is protecting a witness, the patent reference is to the Western scene in which Indians circle the stockade. Once again bloodthirsty savages exist in order to be killed by a hero.

Still, censure of Stallone's violence is not only a waste of time, it is misdirected. The second *Rambo* was an oceanic success around the world, in Beirut and Tel Aviv, in Stockholm and Singapore, as well as in all the Americas. Audiences everywhere want Stallone. He is now so sure of his public that there were no advance press screenings in New York—something that happens only with porn and the tackiest low-budget pictures—as if the star wanted to prove that he doesn't need newspaper and TV and radio reviews. He's right. At one of the New York theaters showing *Cobra*, the film opened at 10 p.m., then played all

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Beautiful Laundrette. Tender, funny, humane, though discursive story of Pakistanis in London today. Exceptionally well acted and directed. (Reviewed 4/7/86)

Tea in the Harem. Another exceptionally well acted and directed story of aliens in a big city—North Africans in Paris. More concerned with fact than insight, thus lesser than *Laundrette*; but the writer-director, Mehdi Charef, is a find. (6/16/86)

Turtle Diary. Glenda Jackson, Ben Kingsley, and Michael Gambon play like chamber musicians in this Harold Pinter script of Russell Hoban's novel. Wry, intelligent treatment of an unlikely small adventure. (3/10/86)

Vagabond. Sandrine Bonnaire's tacit, intense performance of a teenage wanderer in southern France is the core of Agnès Varda's fine work. The mystery of the girl's life and death remains hers, rightly, at the finish. (6/2/86)

SK

through the night to, I hear, big crowds. (A "Cobra-thon," it was called.) How can we reprove a manufacturer for supplying a widely wanted product? *Cobra* is rated R: "Under 17 requires accompanying parent or guardian." Nominally, anyway, this safeguards those under 17. But what about those parents and guardians who flock to *Cobra*, the people who are rearing children under 17 or will be rearing them in time? As long as they hunger for *Rambo* and *Cobra* films—a hunger with no foreseeable finish—why blame *Rambo* and *Cobra*? Why blame Stallone for Cain?

(Stallone has some sense of etiquette. Last year our president, with the sly boyish smile that has charmed millions, said he wished he had seen *Rambo* before the TWA hijacking. This year, a thank-you note. A large picture of Reagan hangs on the wall of *Cobra*'s office.)

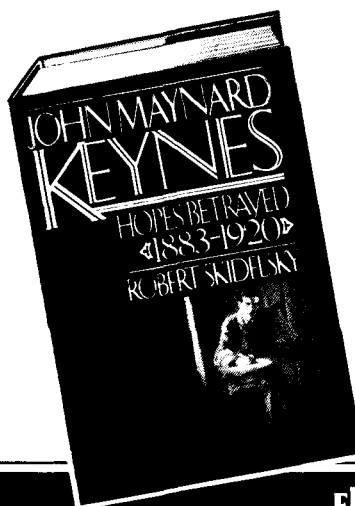
Michael Caine—with an "e," not the biblical one—and Bob Hoskins come along together in two films in one month. The first, an American comedy called *Sweet Liberty* that was too wretched even to pan, had Caine as an English film star, blithely horny, and Hoskins as an American screenwriter, energetically desperate. Both were good. Now both of them are good again in an English film called *Mona Lisa* that is just sufficiently un-wretched to be worth panning.

This one is a drama. Hoskins has the leading role, a bustling, slightly dim London mobster, fresh out of prison after a seven-year stretch. He had been shafted by the mob leader, Caine, who now makes a preemptive strike against vengeance by fixing up a job for Hoskins. The wronged underling is pacified by a post as chauffeur—for a particularly successful call girl (black) who is part of Caine's extensive enterprises.

As drawn by the screenwriters Neil Jordan and David Leland, both the Hoskins and Caine roles are burdensome. The Hoskins character behaves as if he had been away a week instead of seven years. He is quick-witted in fights, then unbelievably stupid at other times—for instance, when he is given money to buy new clothes so he will be inconspicuous while waiting in hotel lobbies. But Hoskins, an experienced London theater actor seen here previously as Owney Madden in *The Cotton Club*, has the bite and fury to help him with the lumpy character. Caine has done his best to wipe his mind clean of all the performances he must have seen of smooth, ruthless

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New York Times

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—Robert L. Heilbroner,
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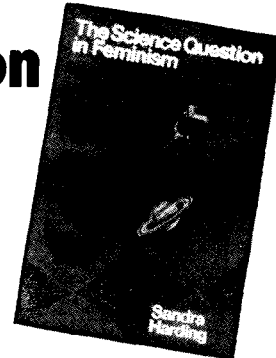
The Science Question in Feminism

By SANDRA HARDING

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crime bosses, and he plays with verity, as if the role had never been written before.

However, the two good actors cannot save the picture. *Mona Lisa* is sententious underworld hokum, dressed up with mod touches like a black and white cast, lesbianism, and drugs, but still drenched in sentimentalities. Hoskins has a loyal garage-mechanic pal and an adoring teenage daughter, to show that he is basically decent. His passenger, Cathy

Tyson, has a heart of gold; what other sort of tart would Hoskins be driving in a film like this? The shadowy huggemugger is heavily laid on, as are "psychological" touches all along the line; and the picture concludes as ridiculously as fake realism always does. Two murders, with plenty of pistol shots, in a Brighton hotel, yet no one comes to inquire.

Twice in a month, Hoskins and Caine have been wasted.

Shortly thereafter Vargas Llosa published his own account of the affair in Western periodicals (including the *New York Times Magazine*), in which he explained the origins of the problem. The Indians of Uchuraccay, whose thousand-year-old culture had been under attack for some time by the guerrillas, were under the misapprehension that the journalists were members of the Shining Path. Vargas Llosa's visit to Uchuraccay finally revealed to him the true nature of guerrilla movements in Latin America:

Perhaps this story helps to clarify the reason for the mind-shattering violence that characterizes guerrilla warfare in Latin America. These guerrilla movements are not "peasant movements." They are born in the cities, among intellectuals and middle-class militants who, with their dogmatism and their rhetoric, are often as foreign and incomprehensible to the peasant masses as Sendero Luminoso is to the men and women of Uchuraccay. The outrages committed by those other strangers—the Government forces of counterinsurgency—tend to win peasant support for the guerrillas.

Put simply, the peasants are coerced by those who think they are the masters of history and absolute truth. The fact is that the struggle between the guerrillas and the armed forces is really a settling of accounts between privileged sectors of society, and the peasant masses are used cynically and brutally by those who say they want to "liberate" them. The peasants always suffer the greatest number of victims: At least 750 of them have been killed in Peru since the beginning of 1983.

TO BE SURE, Vargas Llosa's disenchantment with the Latin American left, in its political, intellectual, academic, and guerrilla expressions, goes back a number of years. Like many Latin American intellectuals, Vargas Llosa spent part of the 1950s in Paris, hatching revolutionary plots at café tables and venerating Sartre, the committed intellectual par excellence, for whom "Marxism was the ultimate philosophical expression." At the time the Cuban revolution represented a new dawn, and guerrilla warfare an almost messianic promise of continental liberation. The 1960s brought the bad news of the socialist world, including that of the so-called "first liberated territory of America"—Cuba. Still, neither the Prague Spring nor Castro's purge of dissident writers altered the convictions of Latin American intellectuals at all, any more than Poland or Afghanistan would

REVOLUTION'S REVENGE

The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta
by Mario Vargas Llosa
translated by Alfred Mac Adam

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 310 pp., \$16.95)

The 1980s in Peru opened with an uncommon burst of hope. After 12 years of de facto rule, the military stepped down and called new elections, which returned to power the same President Fernando Belaúnde Terry they had unceremoniously deposed in 1968. Though the elections themselves could not resolve the country's immense economic and social problems, the return to democracy nonetheless held out the possibility of approaching them in a responsible way.

At the time few recognized the dark symbolism of another new, and utterly different, development: the emergence of a Marxist guerrilla organization known as the "Shining Path" (Sendero Luminoso in Spanish). At first its only evident manifestation—the curious practice of hanging dogs from lampposts with signs attached bearing the name of "Deng Siao Ping," the "running dog" who had betrayed Mao Tse-tung—aroused repugnance rather than fear. But the rapid plunge into more feverish activity very quickly demonstrated that this was a guerrilla group to be taken with the utmost seriousness; it made the Baader-Meinhof group look almost tame by comparison.

Led from a secret command post by Abimael Guzmán—a university professor who, in his own conception, was "the fourth sword of Marxism," along with Marx, Lenin, and Mao—the Senderistas have since preached a form of "pedagogic terror" inspired by the Chi-

nese Cultural Revolution and the practices of Pol Pot. In contrast to all known revolutionary traditions, where the target is always the "class oppressor," the Shining Path singles out for attack the people itself: peasants who choose not to cooperate with their putative liberators, workers who dare to defy calls for a strike. To these expressions of "false historical consciousness," the Shining Path responds not with pamphlets or wall posters, but with guns and knives: mutilation as warning, summary execution as punishment.

In 1983 Mario Vargas Llosa had the opportunity to learn precisely to what extent this "pedagogic terror" had taken hold in parts of Peru. The government of Belaúnde Terry was being held responsible by the radical press and the parliamentary left for the mysterious death of eight journalists in the province of Ayacucho, the mountainous center of Sendero operations. By way of response, the president appointed a blue-ribbon commission—consisting of three members (one of them Vargas Llosa) and eight advisers—to look into the matter. After investigating the scene of the crime for 30 days, and after hearing testimony that would eventually fill a thousand pages of text, the commission concluded that "the journalists were murdered by the peasants of Uchuraccay, with the probable complicity of residents in neighboring communities, in the utter absence of the Peruvian armed forces."

disturb them in the decade thereafter.

At the end of the 1960s, in fact, Vargas Llosa was one of the very few clear exceptions. His interest in the English liberal tradition (especially as it is expressed in the works of Isaiah Berlin) had accustomed him to doubt, to critical examination, to empirical proof, to tolerance of ideas not his own. The disillusionment that *The Gulag Archipelago* provoked among French intellectuals led him to appreciate Albert Camus once more, and to relocate Sartre somewhat lower on the ladder of his intellectual esteem. His philosophical and moral convictions have been most clearly defined by his long and intense polemic with the Latin American intelligentsia, which Vargas Llosa has clearly identified as "a decisive element in our political underdevelopment."

REFERRING specifically to the case of the Chilean poet and Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda (author, as Vargas Llosa has written, of "the richest and most innovative poetry in the Spanish language . . . and also, of hymns of praise to Stalin"), and of the Cuban novelist-diplomat Alejo Carpentier (whose "elegant, skeptical tales" contrast radically with his uncritical servility toward Castro), Vargas Llosa wrote in June 1984:

Here we have an extraordinary paradox: the same person, who in novels or poetry demonstrates a remarkable capacity for audacity and freedom, a willingness to break with tradition, social and literary convention, and a demonstrated ability to radically renew forms, myths, and language, is nonetheless also inclined toward the most depressing conformity in the ideological realm. With prudence, reticence, docility—whatever you will—he does not hesitate to embrace and to advocate the most questionable political dogmas, and more than that—even the cheapest and silliest propaganda slogans.

His criticism was aimed at others as well—for example, at the recently deceased Argentine novelist Julio Cortázar, who began his career as a supporter of General Franco and ended it as an apologist for the Sandinistas. And, of course, at the Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez. For Vargas Llosa, García Márquez perfectly represents the Latin American intellectual who insists that the choice in South America "is not between democracy and dictatorship (Marxist or neo-fascist), but between reaction and revolution, embodied in those infamous archetypes, Pinochet and Castro." In

Vargas Llosa's view, the Latin American intellectual, far from representing a fearless tradition of criticism, has been a guardian of the most rigid orthodoxy, "preventing the democratic option, which is actually the one preferred by our peoples, from acquiring an original expression of its own . . . adapted to the complex realities of our societies."

This lengthy process of disenchantment, for which Vargas Llosa (like Octavio Paz in Mexico) has been widely vilified, reached something of a climax in his report on the events in Uchuraccay, which he held up as a macabre metaphor, expressing the perverse limits to which

ideological zeal can lead. At that moment, overcome with, in his own words, "amazement, indignation, and regret," he conceived *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta*.

Zavalita, the principal character in Vargas Llosa's *Conversation in the Cathedral* (1969), memorably opens that novel by asking, "When was it exactly that Peru began to be screwed up?" The question seems almost upbeat compared with the vision of their country shared by the protagonists of *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta*. The novel takes place in a fictitious locale afflicted by both civil and international war. These circumstances are deliberately exaggerated by the au-

REDEMPTION SONG

THE STORY OF OPERATION MOSES

LOUIS RAPOPORT

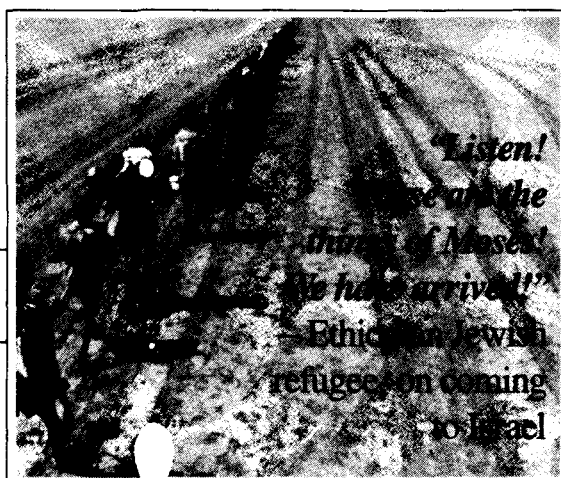
Between November 1984 and March 1985 some eight thousand black

Ethiopian Jews—known as Falashas—were secretly airlifted from famine-racked Africa to Israel. The rescue, when it became public, caught the world's imagination. As William Safire wrote in the *New York Times*: "For the first time in history, thousands of black people are being brought into a country not in chains but in dignity, not as slaves but as citizens."

What came to be called Operation Moses is the complex story of an ancient people who felt themselves driven "home" to Israel. In *Redemption Song*, Louis Rapoport of the *Jerusalem Post* tells that story authoritatively and eloquently.

"A dramatic and heart-rending account . . . Rapoport's report, the first to document this human odyssey, is strongly recommended."—*Library Journal*

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Stan Grossfeld, The Boston Globe

thor, but the apocalypse that they represent is evident less in the story line than in the texture and mood of the novel. The book begins and ends with a description of the garbage "that's invading every neighborhood in the capital of Peru," symbolizing not waste but social decomposition: drugs, hoarding, prostitution, and acts of violence committed by the poor against each other. Every character registers this horror, which grows by leaps and bounds as the story advances. "Things will get worse and worse." "We thought we had touched bottom." In short, Peru is not yet as "screwed up" as it is going to be. Thus in *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta* the memorable phrase is not a question, but a dark affirmation: "There are no limits to our deterioration."

INTO THIS miserable, hopeless scene (which unfortunately all too nearly approximates present-day Peru) steps an alter ego of Vargas Llosa—a Peruvian novelist, a former leftist who sat in bistros in Paris, Madrid, and elsewhere during the 1950s, and believed in the imminence of a Narodnik movement spreading across the Andes. Fifteen years later he returns home to research the circumstances surrounding the life of one Alejandro Mayta, who at the beginning of 1958—a few months before Castro's victory in Cuba—participated in a failed guerrilla insurrection in Jauja, the ancient Inca capital. (Though Mayta is a wholly fictitious creation, the rebellion itself did occur, in 1962.)

Using the same methods that Vargas Llosa employed in his investigation of the events in Uchuraccay, the writer in the novel attempts to reconstruct Mayta's life through a series of individual testimonies, which taken together are partial, inconsistent, or simply unclear. "With each new fact, more contradictions, conjectures, mysteries, and incongruities crop up." And finally, as in the real-life case of Uchuraccay, thousands of details of the event remain unresolved.

But unlike the real Vargas Llosa, the novelist in *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta* is searching for something more than "the facts of the case," in the forensic sense of the term. "What I use," he repeats again and again, "is not the truth of the testimonies, but their power to suggest, their power as inventions, their color, their dramatic strength." The author thus seeks in Mayta the guerrilla "a certain symbolic presence embodying

what came later, an omen whose meaning none was capable of interpreting at the time." The unsuspected reality—ideological violence—is now a daily fact of life in Peru, Colombia, and various Central American countries. What Vargas Llosa seeks—and finds—in *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta* is the human archetype at the heart of this new phenomenon, the revolutionary personality consecrated to an absolute ideal and therefore capable of dying or causing others to die. The fact that Vargas Llosa himself spent some years pinning his hopes for Peru on just such people, and then many more years rejecting their solutions, imparts a deeply personal note to the narrative.

THE MOST important political fact about Alejandro Mayta is his origins. He comes to revolution not through social or economic deprivation, but from a truncated religious vocation. Like so many Latin American radicals, he has studied at a religious high school (technically a seminary), though his instructors were not Jesuits, as is usually the case, but Salesians. Though it is not explored in the novel, the difference between the two religious orders is important. The Jesuits prepare the children of elites for the exercise of power. The Salesians, an order created at the end of the 19th century, concentrate on young men from the humbler social classes, whom they teach the kind of skilled trades that put them in direct contact with workers, peasants, or (in the case of Peru) inhabitants of the shantytowns that ring the capital and other cities. The Jesuits specialize in rhetoric and dialectics: they are the legitimate sons of the Council of Trent. The Salesians, in contrast, exalt the dignity of manual labor: they are the product of Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum novarum*.

Mayta starts out preparing for the priesthood. He attends Mass every day. He crosses himself with conspicuous devotion. He takes Communion frequently. His friends call him "a little saint." The experience of an intensive religious education awakens within him a sense of piety laced with guilt. In a Canadian mission he learns to practice charity in the uniquely Salesian fashion. Thus at 14 he goes on a hunger strike to express his solidarity with the many who do not have enough to eat. His search for perfection, for purity, carries him at times to remarkable extremes—even to a near-suicidal self-flagellation, exemplified by

a denial of the senses and extreme poverty. But paradoxically, abnegation does not humble; it exalts. Hence, to the amazement of his fellow students, Alejandro Mayta, son of a nearly imaginary father, heir to Inca glories, is an incurable optimist.

IN HIS YOUTH Mayta experiences a process of conversion not very different from that undergone by Chernyshevsky and other Russian nihilists—a change of catechism by which ex-seminarians pass, with no inner doubts, from one dogmatic creed to another. Mayta's new faith becomes the revolution; his new prophet, Leon Trotsky. One of the novelist's firsthand sources of information—a nun who had known Mayta many years before the insurrection, and with whom the Trotskyist often discussed religious questions—recalls Mayta's account of the loss of his faith:

No matter how strong your faith is, there comes a moment when you say, *That's it*. It just can't be possible that the remedy for so much iniquity is the promise of eternal life. . . . Misery, the millions of hungry people in Peru. The only subject that counts. Is there a solution? What is it? Who's got it? God? No, Mother. The revolution.

What we have here is not a disenchantment, but rather a transference of loyalties. The seven members of the Trotskyist sect that Mayta finally joins read and reread with ever-greater devotion the sacred texts (Marx, Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution*, Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?*), and argue interminably about the precise implications for Peruvian society of every chapter, passage, and idea. At what point will the revolution come? Do the objective conditions already exist? The subjective ones? Do the people in the slum districts of Lima have a genuine consciousness of class? Is there any revolutionary potential in the armed forces? At times they resemble the Byzantine theologians who used to argue over the gender of the angels, and at others they parallel—in a pallid form, and without being at all aware of the fact—some of the tensest moments in the history of messianism, the wait for the advent of he who will restore harmony to the universe.

In the Peruvian case, as in all others, the millennium holds out a rich utopian vision. The peasants will become owners of the land they work; the industrial proletariat will acquire the factories where they labor. There will be an end

to all exploitation, inequality, fanaticism, and ignorance. Political bosses and their imperialist masters will be no more. Banks, private schools, businesses, and urban real estate will all be nationalized. Popular militias will replace a professional army based on class distinctions. And in accord with the Trotskyist critique of Stalinism,

worker and peasant councils, in their factories, on their collective farms, and in government ministries, would prevent the out-sized growth and consequent ossification of a bureaucracy that would freeze the revolution and use it for its own benefit.

"The assault on heaven . . .," Mayta thinks to himself, somewhat anticipating what would later become the theology of liberation. "We shall bring heaven down from heaven, establish it on earth."

AS IS well known, Trotskyism is a communist heresy. Mayta arrives at it through a gradual process of radicalization characterized by the embrace of a series of heterodoxies. He begins as a member of a traditional political party, which is both nationalist and populist. Having decided that it is insufficiently pure, he leaves it for communism, with which he breaks in turn to become a "Trot." As one of the novelist's informants explains, "He had a self-destructive streak. He was always heterodox, a rebel by nature. As soon as he got involved in something, he began to dissent and he ended up in the dissenting faction."

Some come to regard him as an agent of the CIA; others imagine he has connections with the KGB. (To accentuate Mayta's compulsion toward marginality, Vargas Llosa decides, perhaps unnecessarily, to make him also a closet homosexual who abandons his wife and child, seeking in some undetermined way to achieve through social revolution his personal sexual redemption.) All of this tends to overpower the narrative with an atmosphere of factionalism and intolerance. Mayta celebrates his 40th birthday sharing a garret with rats; he is the object of a police dragnet, wholly absorbed in "sterile polemics," author of "masturbatory pamphlets."

Mayta's sense of frustration gives way to impatience, impatience to action. Lieutenant Vallejos, an army officer (who in fact existed in real life), broaches for him the concrete possibilities of revolutionary praxis by inviting him to join in the Jauja insurrection, along with other conspirators, including a high

school teacher and a justice of the peace. Fifteen years later each has a different—and generally contradictory—view of the "Trot" and his role in the events, but all agree that for him the Jauja experience had a "purifying, redemptive" character.

The reality of revolution is, of course, far less lofty than its ideal. Mayta suffers from flat feet. He is subject to dizziness at high altitudes. He has never been far from urban centers. "He didn't suspect and would perhaps never know that the revolution was a long act of patience, an infinite routine, a terribly sordid thing, a thousand and one wants, a thousand and one vile deeds, a thousand and one . . ." Stupidity, misjudgment, ignorance, fear, treason, innocence, and bad timing—all abort the insurrection. Vallejos and some of his younger collaborators, a few hardly into adolescence, are killed. Mayta is captured and sentenced to a lengthy prison term.

IN THE splendid, final chapter of the novel, the author and Mayta finally meet. Fifteen years have passed since the futile attempt at insurrection in the mountains. Not a trace remains of Mayta's earlier unsettling characteristics. He quietly tends a small ice-cream parlor in Miraflores, a prosperous suburb of Lima, and supports a wife and four children. In confinement he was a model prisoner. Indeed, his pride and joy is not the attempt at social upheaval years before (although neither is he ashamed of it), but rather the tiny revolution of order, cleanliness, and good conduct that he had led in prison. He has no wish to speak of events past. ("You don't know how strange it is for me to talk politics, to remember political events. It's like a ghost that comes back from the pit of time to show me the dead and make me see forgotten things.")

His interlocutor errs, perhaps, in consigning all of this to apathy, moral irresponsibility, cynicism—to the great black hole of disenchantment. For Mayta expresses no anger or regret for what he has been. He manifests a genuine interest in the affairs of daily life—in his family, in his neighborhood—in tangible things, not in the abstractions of the ideal. Perhaps without being fully aware of it, he has returned to the humble, slightly anarchistic philosophy of the Salesian fathers: to work with one's hands among the poor. Having discarded his youthful conviction, Mayta appears to have experienced—along with Vargas Llosa himself—yet another conversion. He has ex-

changed the absolute for the real.

Mayta—the hero of the novel, and the many models for him in recent history—failed in his one serious attempt at social upheaval. But that failure was by no means inevitable. The Jauja insurrection might well have had a different outcome. Certainly some of the elements of success were present. "Over the years," one of the skeptical witnesses tells the novelist, "I've come to realize that he wasn't so crazy. . . . If the first action had lasted longer, things might have turned out the way Mayta planned." Mayta himself, much older and wiser, denies that the rebellion was a suicidal gesture.

The terrain, the possibility of making contact with other centers of provincial rebellion, the role of a determined vanguard—these were elements common to other struggles more successful elsewhere. Mayta's failure was due to accidents and bad timing. "The Cuban Revolution . . . killed that superego that ordered us to accept the dictum that 'conditions aren't right,' that the revolution was an interminable conspiracy," a Communist leader tells the novelist. "With Fidel's entrance into Havana, the revolution seemed to put itself within reach of anyone who would dare fight." Similarly, in the 1960s, "daring to fight" in Bolivia, Ché Guevara chose poorly, in terms both of human and physical geography. Ten years after his death, however, revolutionaries who belonged to the same universe as the youthful Mayta would attend more carefully to the details, and perhaps obtain the power that had eluded him.

MAYTA IN power? The idea should not be dismissed. Certain features of the current political terrain in Central America suggest that it is not so far-fetched after all. From Peru as far north as Guatemala—the many differences of setting notwithstanding—numerous university-based guerrilla movements have sought, still seek, and in one case have attained, the totality of political power. Or, failing that, they have at least achieved cultural hegemony. In some state universities in Mexico—to take one outstanding case in point—Marxism functions as the exclusive doctrine. It is, in effect, a latter-day kind of scholastic orthodoxy. Obviously it would be ridiculous to claim that the Latin American left is a political or doctrinal monolith, but there can be no doubt that its characteristic features (factionalism, purges, and other forms

of intolerance) are what shape it in all its current manifestations—in guerrilla movements or in political parties (in government or in opposition), in university classrooms, in the press.

Although the failures of socialism when it is genuinely practiced, and the recent springtime of liberal thought in Western Europe, have provoked a partial reconsideration of the virtues of “bourgeois democracy,” the left in Central America has yet to renounce the absolute in order to attain the real. In other words, it has yet to make Mayta’s journey. Rather, beneath its “modern” facade one can see the continued thralldom of ancient habits of intolerance. It is no coincidence that Mayta and the novelist who traces his path finally meet at the old Museum of the Inquisition in Lima—that event which remains “an essential ingredient, always present” in Peruvian history: physical and moral violence based on doctrinal intransigence.

MOREOVER, the recent emergence of revolutionary thought in unexpected places suggests that what in the past have been ideological opposites are in the process of convergence, as the leftist “church” becomes also the Church left. Both tendencies, though embraced by minorities, are powerful. Mayta and the nuns discover, much to their surprise but perhaps less to our own, that they are “not so far apart, after all.” We speak freely of the recrudescence of religious fanaticism in other parts of the world, of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Muammar al-Qaddafi, or Rabbi Meir Kahane; but we often neglect to consider Latin American Marxism as an important branch of the same phenomenon.

Of course one should not exaggerate the degree of its influence, or the concrete possibilities of its success. Most of the leaders of the Latin American left belong to the so-called “sixties generation,” but with one very important difference: unlike their opposite numbers in France or the United States, they still preserve much of the inner tension of that now-distant decade. Moreover, the ideological zeal of those times has spread among the younger generation. How does one deal with ideological fanaticism? With a wise mixture of firmness and prudence, not by unleashing a holy war of one’s own.

In spite of the fact that there still appear to be “no limits to deterioration,” Latin America continues to opt over-

whelmingly for the democratic path. In this it diverges importantly from its own intelligentsia, which has become the clergy, the prophets, the inquisition of a new politico-theological order. These are the adversaries against whom Vargas Llosa holds up the ideas of individual liberty, tolerance, the critical spirit:

A few rules of the game permitting the peaceful coexistence of different points of view—this is the best preventive measure we can take against the repression, the censorship, and the civil wars that disfigure our own history and continue to plunge us

into economic underdevelopment and political barbarism.

His democratic heresy does not hold out the promise of heaven on earth. It leaves the former where it is, and seeks to make the latter a place less wretched, less unjust, above all, less oppressive.

ENRIQUE KRAUZE

Enrique Krauze is the deputy editor of *Vuelta* in Mexico City, and has written widely on the history and culture of Latin America.

CENTS AND SENSIBILITY

John Maynard Keynes, Volume One:
Hopes Betrayed, 1883-1920
by Robert Skidelsky

(Viking/Elisabeth Sifton Books, 447 pp., \$24.95)

Economics may not necessarily be a dismal science, but it is seldom a sexy subject, and its practitioners are rarely famous or fascinating people. Yet during the 1950s and 1960s, when his posthumous reputation was at its zenith, John Maynard Keynes was widely acclaimed, not only among academics as an economist of genius, but also much more widely as the savior of Western capitalism. His life was fittingly celebrated in Sir Roy Harrod’s biography, a devoted, discreet, and didactic book, which depicted Keynes not as a private person but as a public paragon, who had discovered and disseminated the secret of eternal growth. And his theories were as influential as they seemed to be infallible, enabling successive postwar governments to tame the trade cycle, conquer unemployment, and so bring about the affluent society. Here, emphatically and unusually, was the economist as public benefactor, popular hero, and cult figure.

But during the last 15 years, Keynes has been abruptly dethroned as the presiding deity of the Western economic miracle, not least because the miracle itself now looks so much less enduring and robust than it once did. In a world ravaged simultaneously by inflation and depression, Keynesian economics seems increasingly outmoded, unhelpful, and irrelevant. In Reaganite Washington and Thatcherite London, monetarism is in

the ascendant, deficit spending is disapproved of, welfare programs are in retreat, and balanced budgets are once more the declared objective. But in addition, the man himself has become something of a fallen idol, as the guardians of his reputation have passed away, leaving a new generation of Bloomsbury scholars to portray him, less reverentially, as a self-centered, self-indulgent homosexual, a bawdy and brittle braggart, who was too clever for his own good, and too crude for anyone else’s. The celebrated colossus has become a contemporary casualty.

Put more positively, this means that it has finally become possible to get Keynes in perspective, to explore the diversity of his personality in a more candid and critical way, to evaluate his contribution to economics as historical fact rather than conventional wisdom, and to investigate the interconnections that may have existed between the life of the man and the workings of his mind. And it is precisely this wide-ranging approach to Keynes that Robert Skidelsky adopts in this first volume of his biography. For he believes that Keynes’s outstanding intellectual achievements should not be explained as disembodied cerebration, but as the expression of his individual gifts and personality, molded and modified by historical circumstance. And such contextual treatment at once

opens up a major new perspective on Keynes's life, namely the inner conflict between his wish to cultivate a good state of mind for himself and his desire to do good things in the world for society at large. Indeed, it is Keynes's gradual discovery of that contradiction, and his successive attempts to resolve it, that provide the theme for this fascinating volume.

KEYNES inherited a strong sense of duty and respectability from his parents, who were both descended from upwardly mobile members of the non-conformist middle class. He was born in 1883 into Cambridge academic life, which meant that his childhood was both comfortable and cerebral. His father was a minor intellectual and university administrator, an uncreative and unassertive man, who sought to fulfill most of his ambitions through Maynard, who was better able to realize them. His mother was the more dominant partner, who was much concerned with local good causes, and eventually became mayor of Cambridge. Maynard was a sickly youth, bad at games, and convinced of his irremediable ugliness. But he successfully sought compensation in mental activity and scholarly competition. In his early years he showed exceptional gifts and remarkable promise. In 1897 he won a King's Scholarship to Eton, where his career was a resounding success, both socially and intellectually, and in 1902 he returned triumphantly to Cambridge as a scholar of King's College.

As an undergraduate, his academic progress continued unchecked: he was elected president of the Union Society, and did outstandingly well in his mathematical examinations. But as Skidelsky vividly demonstrates, Keynes's main interests now shifted dramatically from public performance to private passion, as exemplified in his affair with the profane and homosexual Lytton Strachey. Very early in his King's career, he was elected to the Apostles, a secret, irreverent, and unworldly society, whose members were much engaged with philosophy and ethics. The most powerful influence was that of G.E. Moore, whose *Principia Ethica* was published in 1903, and fully articulated the view that being good was more important than doing good, and that human relations and abstract thought were ethically more valuable than worldly endeavor or conventional attitudes. Keynes was profoundly influenced by this ideal, and al-

though it was the very antithesis of his parents' notions of decency and dutifulness, he remained loyal to it, in some ways, for the rest of his life.

From his graduation in 1905 until the outbreak of the First World War, Keynes was primarily concerned with living the good life as prescribed by Moore. He studied economics briefly under Alfred Marshall, worked for a short time at the India Office, and obtained a fellowship at King's. He worked on probability, lectured in economics, wrote a book on Indian currency and finance, and sat on a Royal Commission. But his private life was his major preoccupation: a long affair with Duncan Grant, a painful estrangement from Lytton Strachey, and growing involvement with the Bloomsbury group. At this time he had no premonition that Liberal England was dying, or that the Western world was on the brink of self-destruction. The contemporary debates on the Poor Law and unemployment passed him by. And he regarded economics as an inferior branch of human knowledge, which held out no prospect of social improvement. On the whole, he was more interested in the choice of new Apostles than in the election of new governments.

But the First World War changed that forever. Keynes was summoned to the Treasury, where he remained, close to great men and great events, until June 1919. Initially he was concerned with opposing the suspension of gold payments by the Bank of England, but for most of the conflict, he was deeply—and ever more influentially—involved with the external financing of the war effort. He relished direct executive responsibility, got on well with the professionals at the Treasury, and became the friend of Reginald McKenna, Asquith, and Bonar Law. But the war also brought on a great crisis of conscience—which, like his homosexuality, Harrod deliberately suppressed—as the aesthetic side of Keynes protested against the actions and attitudes of the man of affairs. Most of his Bloomsbury friends opposed the war from the outset, and after the introduction of conscription, Keynes himself became a conscientious objector and considered resigning altogether from government service. But despite much scorn and scolding from the Stracheys and the Woolfs, Whitehall triumphed over Bloomsbury. "I work," he wrote in 1917, "for a government I despise for ends I think crimi-

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nal." But he kept on working all the same.

By the end of the war, nevertheless, he was profoundly unhappy. He accompanied Lloyd George (to whom he had taken an instant and heartily reciprocated dislike) to the Paris peace conference, and was appalled by what he saw and what was signed. He resigned from the Treasury in disgust and wrote a blistering polemic, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, which made him an instant celebrity. It was as masterly in style as in substance; the characterizations of the prime protagonists were unforgettably savage; and its central argument, that the excessive reparations demanded of Germany would ultimately undermine the whole Western economic system, was devastatingly vindicated by subsequent events. Yet the passion of the prose was personal as much as professional: an attempt to atone for the guilt he felt over his involvement in the war. And ironically enough, it was only because the Western economies did indeed collapse in the interwar years that Keynes was confronted with a massive and practical economic problem, the solving of which provoked him into the full display of his outstanding gifts.

By the end of the war, Keynes was not alone in fearing that capitalism was doomed unless some determined efforts were made to save it. It was not yet clear that he was the man to make them, however, or what his methods would be. But the war—and the peace—had irrevocably transformed him into the public man he was to remain for the rest of his life—an adviser to governments, a leading authority on reparations, a city tycoon, a cultural entrepreneur, and a coruscating journalist. Yet it is Skidelsky's belief that this apparent rejection of Apostolic attitudes was in fact the triumphant resolution of the contradiction between the desire to be good and the need to do good. In part, Keynes turned his attentions increasingly to economics because he excelled at it, was excited by it, and so achieved a happier state of mind as a result. But using economics to promote the well-being of society as a whole also enabled him to satisfy the competing claims of public duty. "The General Theory" was thus simultaneously an essay in personal salvation and an exercise in collective improvement.

How successful is this portrait of the economist as a young man? The difficulties Skidelsky contended with in paint-

ing it were undoubtedly formidable. Throughout the period covered by this book, Keynes was an unusual man but not yet a great man, an apprentice genius but in no sense a major historical figure. By definition, therefore, much of his early life is of limited intrinsic interest and becomes important only when viewed in the light of those later and greater events that lie well beyond the scope of this first volume. Moreover, it is difficult to set Keynes in the context of late-19th-century thought without losing sight of the man himself, just as it is hard to write of his homosexuality without seeming prurient and sensationalist. Above all, to deal with the Cambridge background, the cultural context, the emotional involvements, the economics and the individuals, requires an array of accomplishments and a degree of expository skills that few historians can boast. It is a measure of Skidelsky's real achievement that he triumphantly surmounts these obstacles, and thereby provides the most vivid and plausible picture yet of a young man who was clearly much more interesting and much less perfect than Harrod's sanitized saint.

But however successfully he has carried out his self-appointed task, the approach he has adopted in this biography is not without its difficulties. By concen-

trating on setting Keynes in context, Skidelsky gives insufficient attention to the impact that he made on other people. By stressing his many-sidedness, the range of his gifts is memorably conveyed, but the essence of his personality is never fully captured, and the individual himself remains elusive. By devoting so much time to his intellectual background and his emotional entanglements, we never really gain a sense of just what it was about Keynes's peculiar brand of cleverness that so impressed others—and so impressed himself. Above all, in attempting to draw together the many strands of Keynes's diverse and varied life, it may be that Skidelsky has tried just a little too hard to integrate and homogenize what was, by his own admission, a highly compartmentalized existence. What Keynes did in his bed was one thing; what he did in his head was quite another. The supreme achievement of his work was that he unified economics, but whether economics ever quite unified his life remains an open question.

DAVID CANNADINE

David Cannadine is a fellow of Christ's College and a lecturer in history at Cambridge University.

THE ART OF OMISSION

Monkeys by Susan Minot

(E. P. Dutton / Seymour Lawrence, 128 pp., \$15.95)

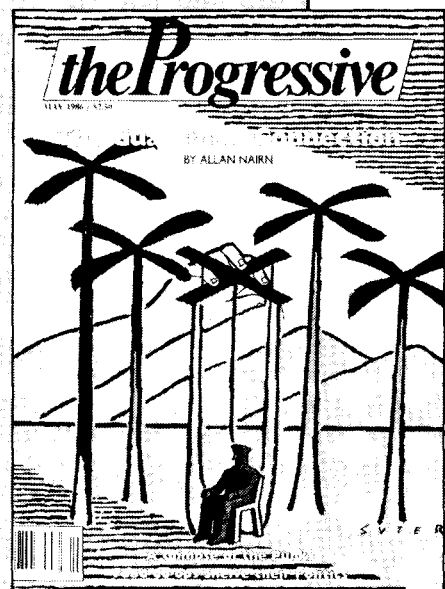
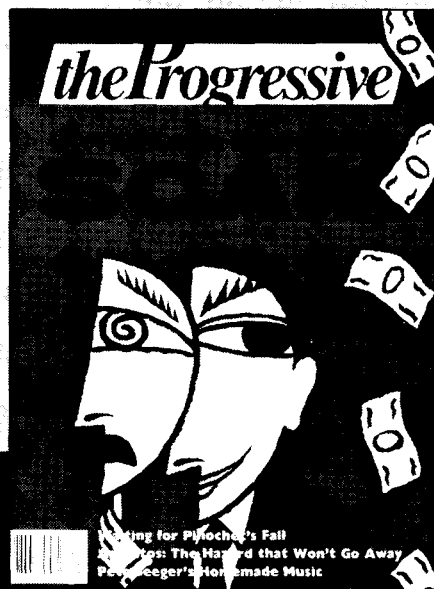
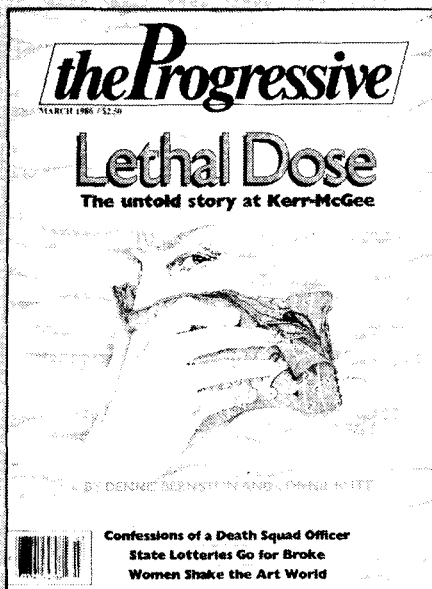
In art classes students are sometimes asked to draw an object by drawing the space that surrounds it. A chair, for instance, is defined by the areas between its rungs. The chair itself emerges only by implication.

Susan Minot, one of the youngest and most impressive new arrivals on the literary scene, achieves exactly that effect in her first novel. *Monkeys* is a group of nine stories—each of which could stand alone—covering some 13 years in the lives of the Vincents, a large Catholic family with homes in Massachusetts and Maine. Most of the events selected for inclusion seem deliberately humdrum: a hotel meal, a Thanksgiving dinner, a

yacht club tea. They're the equivalent of the spaces between chair rungs, you might say; but what emerges from them takes your breath away.

Look at "Hiding," the first and perhaps the best of the stories. The narrator is one of the children, Sophie, and the plot is nothing but her description of their activities on a typical Sunday. In the morning, she says, everyone attends Mass except for their father, who is not a Catholic. After Mass they all have breakfast, and then they go skating. In the evening their father runs an errand, and their mother—a merry, fun-loving woman who fondly refers to the children as her "monkeys"—suggests that they

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hide in the linen closet to surprise him. But when he comes back, he hardly notices they're missing. He settles down to watch TV. His wife and children creep forth, finally, and stand around wondering what to do next.

All that's wrong with this family (and all that's right, as well) is laid out for us in this story, but it's laid out solely by inference. We readers arrive at our own conclusions. Ingeniously (we congratulate ourselves) we piece together the clues, and the final verdict therefore seems truer, deeper, more disturbing.

"The Navigator" packs an equally powerful punch. There we're offered a child's-eye view of the parents' social life—the bustle as they dress for a party, the postmortem the next morning—followed by a description of an island picnic. As always, the tone is calm and cheerful, the style refreshingly simple. Then at the end of the story, a beer-can tab is popped open. You'll have to take my word for it that in its context the sound is as cataclysmic as a gunshot. It's a moment that freezes time, and it makes the dramatic intensity of the final paragraph seem entirely appropriate:

Sometimes on still, black nights they had had throwing contests off the dock. They threw stones into the thorofare and listened to hear them land. Sometimes the darkness would swallow up a stone and they'd wait, but no sound would come. It seemed then

as if the stone had gone into some further darkness, entered some other dimension where things went on falling and falling.

The thread that draws the stories into a novel is a tragedy that occurs two-thirds of the way through the book. It casts shadows in both directions. Not only does it alter everything that comes after, but it gives the preceding chapters new poignancy—so much so that readers will probably want to return to them after the final page.

What's interesting is that this single, crucial event takes place offstage. It's referred to only obliquely, recalled in part and at some distance—the ultimate in defining the object by means of the spaces around it. And it is extraordinarily effective. Not since Larry Woiwode's *Beyond the Bedroom Wall* have I seen such a convincing portrait of a family in mourning—people with all their colors gone, bewildered and aimless, barely limping through their lives.

But it's not just the angle of the narrative that makes *Monkeys* so striking. There's the language, which is pure and plain and direct. After all, we're seeing mainly what various children choose to describe for us, and to just the right degree Susan Minot reproduces the clarity and deadly accuracy of a child's speech. You won't find any fancy stylistic exhibitions here, but on the other hand she knows how children can sometimes toss

off an amazingly graceful phrase. A small boy is buttoned into his snow-suit till he's "knot-tight." A mother uncurls a newborn baby's "fiddlehead fists." A rain at sea makes "windy bruises" over the surface of the water, and a bay in calm weather is "a silk tablecloth with sailboats sitting on top." Or here's Bermuda, where the Vincents vacation one year:

The grass was scratchy and rough, not at all like the grass at home, and the air had a thickness that made your bones feel loose. Stepping into the coral caves was like entering a seashell, with a low wind rushing and the echo of water slaps. Rays wheeled by through the pleated shallows on strange rubber wings, and green lizards, like elongated stars, appeared stuck onto the white

walls inside the cottage. Gus claimed he saw a hunchbacked animal on the golf course one night; it was a laughing hyena, he said, with yellow eyes and striped fur. No one but the little boys believed him.

As we settle in with these children, we're reminded not only of childhood's anxieties and enigmas but also of its comforts and its soothing rituals. We're back among the mitten baskets, the cat who bats diners' shins under the table in hopes of handouts, the Sugar Pops (Sugar Pops!) casting "pebble shadows" in the bowl. The youngest daughter sits at supper with "the table up to her neck." The mother calls to the abstracted father, musing over his turtle soup, "Yoo-hoo!" The father swings his putter in the dining room, making a "tlock" as he pretends to connect with the ball, and "Around the breakfast table there was a gentle craning of necks as the invisible ball rolled over the straw carpet." It's the "gentle" that does it, I think—that reference to the benign, empathic, bending spirit that exists among the members of even just a semi-happy family.

Here's one final passage to consider—a description of the mother as she ice skates. It's beautifully written, but in addition it's a marvelous example of how Susan Minot sneaks more into a scene than we first suspected.

Mum practices her 3s from when she used to figure skate. She pushes forward on one skate, turning in the middle like a petal flipped suddenly in the wind. We always make her do a spin. First she does backward crossovers, holding her wrists like a tulip in her fluorescent pink parka, then stops straight up on her toes, sucking in her breath and dips, twisted, following her own tight circle, faster and faster, drawing her feet together. Whirring around, she lowers into a crouch, ventures out one balanced leg, a twirling whirlpool, hot pink, rises again, spinning, into a blurred pillar or a tornado, her arms going above her head and her hands like the eye of a needle. Then suddenly: stop. Hiss of ice shavings, stopped. We clap our mittens. Her hood has slipped off and her hair is spread across her shoulders like when she's reading in bed, and she takes white breaths with her teeth showing and her pink mouth smiling. She squints over our heads. Dad is way off at the car, unlacing his skates on the tailgate but he doesn't turn. Mum's face means that it's time to go.

Think about it.

ANNE TYLER

JULIAN OF NORWICH

Warped in the window-diamonds of my cell,
distorted, outsize primroses unfold:
I see all manner of things that shall be well.

Eyeless men with plague-sores come to chapel,
hungry, with blood-soaked poultices, and cold.
Warped in the window-diamonds of my cell,
they lurch and fall, inert. Another dead bell.
Their king gone, my King blesses (dressed in gold,
I see), all manner of things that shall be well.

Hermits recoil. If I were to foretell
doom, monks would believe. Instead, I'm called
warped. In the window-diamonds of my cell
are men who know Black Death and wars, and tell
of starless night, and will until I'm old,
I see. All manner of things that shall be well
deceive: dense glass in quarrel panes can spell
disaster, lunacy. Faces are bold,
warped in the window-diamonds of my cell.
I see all manner of things that shall be well.

GRACE SCHULMAN

HOW TO MEASURE A MONSTER

Nero: The End of a Dynasty by Miriam T. Griffin

(Yale University Press, 320 pp., \$25)

Scholarly historians have traditionally made it their business to provide balanced and judicious appraisals of the major figures, forces, and events in history, but it is hard to write something balanced and judicious about a monster. Can one really be fair to Adolf Hitler or Idi Amin? Should one even try? The historian can look for explanations of cruel and aberrant behavior. He can search for good amid evil. But historical objectivity simply cannot survive the greatest enormities of human history.

Among the emperors of Rome, Caligula and Elagabalus prove the most intractable for sober historians. Readers will only smile when a scholar invites them to contemplate Caligula's foreign policy or Elagabalus's religious policy. Such men did not have policies. They were pathologically deranged, and all that those around them could do was to protect their own interests. Under such rulers it was safer to be in the provinces because, as Tacitus put it, cruel emperors tend to oppress those who are near them.

Nero poses more subtle problems than Caligula and Elagabalus because he ruled for a considerably longer time (from A.D. 54 to 68), and there was much to commend as well as to condemn in his reign. Already in antiquity a popular tradition claimed that the first five years of Nero's rule were as felicitous as the rest were calamitous. This paradox prompted speculation about the relative harmlessness of bad rulers as long as they had good advisers. Moreover, Nero liked culture (he was himself a poet, musician, and actor) and encouraged it. The brilliant flowering of prose and poetry at Rome during his reign produced what was undoubtedly the greatest age of Roman literature after Augustus.

In her new biography Miriam Griffin has resolutely set about to provide a thorough, judicious, and balanced assessment of Nero. She succeeds as well as anyone could, exploring with donnish curiosity every interpretation and testing every source. Yet the appalling character of the man and the horrifying acts that he committed seem to make such scholarly delicacy sometimes beside the point.

How can historical inquiry encompass the career of a man who murdered his mother, burned down a large part of Rome, built himself a vast estate on the ashes, and illuminated the city at night by igniting people as living torches?

To be sure, while all this was going on, Seneca comported himself as a humanitarian sage, Lucan wrote a great epic poem, Petronius composed a novel of genius, and the machinery of provincial government cranked on more or less as it had before. Nonetheless, monsters do ultimately have a way of profoundly altering the course of history. In Nero's case the megalomaniacal outrages ultimately led to a dissolution of power at Rome that undermined the Julio-Claudian dynasty and opened the way for a series of new leaders who emerged from the periphery of the Roman Empire. Yeats's too-often-quoted words are wonderfully apposite for the reign of Nero: "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold."

Griffin provides an arresting picture of the center as it collapses. She knows the classical texts well, but unfortunately she knows them so well that she cannot free herself from their perspectives and prejudices. And so the career of Nero is explained largely in terms of court intrigue and the ceaseless jockeying for political influence at Rome. Nero's sound impulses are ascribed along Tacitean lines to the beneficent counsels of Seneca (who might better be cast as a self-serving hypocrite). Nero's deterioration into murder, arson, and public depravity is explained, again according to the Tacitean scheme, by the ascendancy of the wicked prefect of the praetorian guard Ofonius Tigellinus.

Worse still, Nero's celebrated enthusiasm for Greek culture appears as some kind of regrettable fault, because Griffin has inadvertently adopted the snobbish superiority of the Roman sources. In Rome a taste for Sophocles or Demosthenes, safely dead for three centuries or more, was considered entirely correct, but the Roman attitude toward contemporary Greeks in the time of Nero or Tacitus was patronizing at best. Nero

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took them seriously, however. He mastered their language, and (in a dramatic if ill-considered gesture) formally declared Greece liberated from Roman imperial rule. Although Vespasian restored the stupefied Greeks to the Roman provincial system only a few years later, most Greek intellectuals of subsequent generations could not suppress a certain secret partiality for an emperor they knew perfectly well had been cruel and capricious. Even five years before the liberation of Greece, the Athenians had taken the unprecedented step (unknown to Griffin) of honoring Nero with an inscription in large bronze letters fastened to the eastern architrave of the Parthenon.

Nero's philhellenism is far more complex than Griffin tells us. In fact, she tries at times to suggest that he was more of a Roman than we think because the Greek competitive games he founded in Italy in his own honor were not named, in the old Greek manner, after a deity

but after himself. Here she makes a serious mistake. The Neronia, as the competitions were called, were exactly comparable to several contemporary agonistic festivals in which genuine Greeks honored other Greeks by name. What Griffin fails to appreciate is the contemporaneity of Nero's hellenism, and that is just what the ancient historians of Rome also failed to appreciate.

SIMILARLY, she believes that an insecure Nero took up hellenism in order to get applause, which he always wanted. In an interesting "Post-Mortem on the Fall of Nero" at the end of her book, she claims that the principate of Augustus (no less) had encouraged Nero's philhellenism, which she treats, of course, as a vice. Because in her view Augustus had imposed a Western bias on the empire, "the system made Greeks anxious to welcome any Roman Emperor willing to favor Greek sentiments and tastes." Such an interpretation, ignoring a vital and profound strain of Greek culture throughout Roman history, manages to obscure the honorable diplomacy by which Augustus himself won the allegiance of Greeks in his day while suggesting at the same time that the Greeks of Nero's day were a lazy and shiftless lot waiting for someone to flatter them. Tacitus might have thought that, but there is no reason why we should.

Griffin is similarly a prisoner of her sources when she tries to assess the alarming acceleration in Nero's outrages during the sixties. Those who conspired against him in 65 could not endure, according to one ancient writer, the emperor's shamelessness, licentiousness, and cruelty. Griffin soberly notes in the best tutorial style—she is good at asking questions, although her answers are sometimes as unsatisfactory as the sources she is interrogating—that although his cruelty went back a good many years, his licentiousness surfaced only the year before, when he married the freedman Pythagoras at a public banquet. So, she concludes by wondrous logic, "his shamelessness had not yet emerged: Nero was still sensitive and responsive to public opinion." But it is a sad fact of the real world that licentiousness and shamelessness are not mutually exclusive categories, to say nothing of cruelty.

While the center failed to hold, several creatures were slouching toward Rome from the remotest parts of the empire. In not much over a year after Nero's death,

in June of 68, four new emperors were raised to the throne of the Caesars, and the last of these, Vespasian, was the founder of the Flavian dynasty that replaced Nero's Julio-Claudian line. Three of these successors owed their elevation to the support of legionary troops in the provinces. The first challenged Nero from Spain, to be replaced in turn by a short-lived candidate of the praetorian guard who was himself ejected by a general from the Rhineland. The fourth and surviving emperor came to Rome from Judea. Another aspirant staked an unsuccessful claim from North Africa. Nothing demonstrates more clearly than the events of 68-69 the extraordinary opportunities available to ambitious Roman commanders on or near the frontiers when the central authority was disrupted. The threat from the provinces could have been foreseen at the time, since there had already been a few false alarms under the earlier Julio-Claudian rulers.

IT IS too bad, therefore, that the whole subject of legionary commands, providing a menacing reservoir of potential emperors, is missing from Griffin's account of Nero. Of course the subject is not immediately relevant to a biography of the man, but it must dominate any historical interpretation of his fall. It is especially pertinent to the emergence of Vespasian, that pragmatic and business-like antithesis of Nero who succeeded, where three had failed, in establishing a new dynasty at Rome. For Vespasian had commanded the Roman forces against the Jews during the bloody war that began in 66 and was not finally brought to a conclusion until the capture of Masada in 73.

Oddly this major war (for which Gessius Florus, a Neronian appointee, was largely responsible) scarcely figures in Griffin's book. All we are told is that Florus, as a Greek from Asia Minor with a Greek wife, was a poor choice for the governorship of Judea, because Greeks could not be expected to understand Jews. This obviously will not do in a treatment of Nero's last years. It merely mirrors the dismissive attitude of the Roman sources. Besides, we need to observe the means by which Vespasian gradually turned the crisis to his own advantage, and fortunately the Jewish historian Josephus allows us to do this.

Griffin's *Nero* is instructive and reliable on the matters it covers, but one

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craves a treatment that moves more freely among the great historical issues that the name of Nero inevitably calls up. The abuse of power and a people's response to it are themes too timely and momentous to be confined to judicious summaries of the ancient literature. We shall never adequately understand the Roman world and what happened to it

until we look at it from the periphery instead of the center.

G. W. BOWERSOCK

G. W. Bowersock is a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and the author most recently of *Roman Arabia* (Harvard University Press).

Reconsideration: Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER

BY ALFRED KAZIN

THOMAS CARLYLE said of Walt Whitman that he thinks he is a big poet because he comes from a big country. Whitman did indeed believe that his wanting to be a "big" poet, the epic poet of "these states" in a style expansive, oratorical, boastfully confessional, had everything to do with the continental size and massive historic push of the United States. To alert the world to *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, he announced: "Here at last is something in the doings of man that corresponds with the broadcast doings of the day and night. Here is action untied from strings, necessarily blind to particulars and details, magnificently moving in masses."

A hundred years after Emily Dickinson's body was carried from "The Homestead" on Main Street to the cemetery by Irish laborers working on "my father's ground," the broadcast doings of her big, ever-bigger and more wasteful country would have baffled and bored her as much as did the historic push of the United States during her lifetime. When the United States was making war on Mexico so that we could grab the whole of our present Southwest, Emily Dickinson was a student at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary and archly inquired of her brother Austin: "Do you think the Mexicans will besiege South Hadley?" What she would have made of an army of woman poets memorializing her (it was not her first editor, Mabel Todd, or her admiring friend the novelist Helen Hunt Jackson who understood her poetry best in her own time, but her

difficult sister-in-law Sue Gilbert) is as difficult for me to imagine as her response to the following scene during the 1984 presidential campaign. A woman is wearing a button marked simply "Ferraro," and when asked, "Isn't someone else running with her?" she replies: "We like her better than we like him."

The intensest privacy, solitude, loneliness of the Puritan experience in New England (a moribund theocracy virtually cut off from the sprawling continent until the Revolution) is perhaps paralleled in modern America only by writers from immigrant enclaves echoing local idiosyncratic speech patterns. Millions of Americans have had nothing in common but their being Americans. Dickinson had little in common religiously and stylistically with expansive New York types like Whitman and Melville. Though her response to an Emerson lecture was pure awe, she had little enough in common with Emerson's main work, which was in prose. Despite a certain similarity of gnomic style in their poetry, her own, so full of intense personal outcries, does not share the abstractedness, the professional good nature, above all the sly preachiness, of Emerson's poetry.

What, she says in poem after poem, do I have in common with others? What on so many terrible days do I have in common even with myself? (A later, flamboyantly Yankee poet writing against the background of New York's mass life, e. e. cummings, liked to say—and how often he said it—a poet's "supreme country" is himself.) Dickinson never celebrated herself as a type—not of New England, not even of Amherst and her own family, certainly not of poets who

constantly praise each other because they are woman poets. She did not come from anyone else's big country. Which may be why so much of our hindsight about her serves to make me remember the observation of the Italian critic Paolo Milano, a refugee here during the war—"she is the only one of your classic Americans who gives me the satisfaction that the best European poets do."

Still, she had a locality, a whole series of issues preoccupying her that became leading themes in her work—religious, stylistic, sexual. Not political except as she described, in her most creative period, the devastation of the Civil War, the local boys being returned in coffins. Not a poet of systematic ideas like Whitman, but more intensely reflective on the immediacies of life and death (especially death) than anyone else of her time except Melville, she is clearly the subject—above all to herself—of a certain enclosure. This died with the old rural America just as she was dying.

Amherst was the very prototype of New England's historic small town: the village common, the five Congregationalist churches of her day, with the "Calvinist bell" (as someone called it) always tolling the hour. And ask not for whom it tolls, since Calvinism in its arbitrary but not assured promise of salvation for the elect prolonged more than the usual anxiety about the next world. Puritanism internalized, even in decay, the already tremulous self-dependence of a frontier society—and the Connecticut Valley was the next frontier after Massachusetts Bay. The immediate application in oratory, sermon, and imaginative literature was to one's deepest feelings, to oneself—always the self, but as the protagonist on earth of a celestial drama.

THE MAIN forms of New England writing came, of course, out of the diary that rendered up one's accounts to God at the end of each year. Prayer and sermon both tended to expostulate with oneself. Stylistically, the effect of the Bible, the derivative influence of its grammar, which like all ancient tongues practiced a condensation and contractedness peculiarly suitable to man's constant interrogation of God's will, was to find its ultimate performance in what Emerson called "dry light and hard expressions."

The New England saints and sages were to live not by good deeds but by style—always stripping life down to fundamentals and essentials, to aphorisms, parables, riddles. The absolute in

Alfred Kazin is the author most recently of *An American Procession* (Knopf).

Thoreau's life personifies the absolute he tried to live; he said he wanted to drive life into a corner. He got what he wanted. That certainly happened to Emily Dickinson, that passionate being, little as she may have *wanted* to live her life in the circular second-story bedroom. But as necessary containment, the ultimate compression to lapidary phrases, exclamations, rhapsodies, riddles, her style of abruptness and emotional indentation represents some kind of ultimate poetry of the heart's immediacies. Even her punctuation—dashes between words, dashes marking off one line from another, the dashes positively breathing—can remind us, as only the greatest poets do, of our fundamental despair of words, mere words, crying out against the silence of the universe.

But no other poet dominated by the church as an institution could have written, "It is true that the unknown is the largest need of the intellect, although for it no one thinks to thank God." No other New Englander forever hearing thanks to God could have added, "We thank thee, Father, for these strange minds that enamor us against thee."

One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted—
One need not be a House—

The Brain has Corridors—
surpassing
Material Place—

She called God a "Force illegible," while admitting "All Circumstances are the Frame/In which His Face is set." From a casual letter: "I was thinking today—as I noticed, that the 'Supernatural' was only the Natural, disclosed." From another letter: "God was penurious with me, which makes me shrewd with Him." Still another:

The seeing pain one can't relieve makes a demon of one. If angels have the heart beneath their silver jackets, I think such things could make them weep, but Heaven is so cold! It will never look kind to me that

God, who causes all, denies such little wishes. It could not hurt His glory, unless it were a lonesome kind. I must conclude it is.

(Perhaps only Rilke echoed that in *Poems from the Book of Hours*: "You, Neighbor God, if sometimes in the night/I rouse you with loud knocking, I do so/only because I seldom hear you breathe/and know: you are alone./And should you need a drink, no one is there/to reach it to you, groping in the dark./Always I

further and further from our sight.

The sense of enclosure set physical limitations as necessary relations. Obviously these were not altogether hindrances to the intellect; one cannot imagine a mind less constrained, more playful about every one of her surroundings. Still, the poet was brought into the local net. The Dickinsons were Amherst's leading family. They acted it. When the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind actually performed one evening in Northampton—advertisements for special trains to the event still line the corridors of Northampton's ancient hotel—Emily described Father, not Jenny Lind:

Father sat all the evening looking mad, and yet so much amused you would have died a-laughing. It wasn't sarcasm, exactly, nor it wasn't disdain, it was infinitely funnier than either of those virtues, as if old Abraham had come to see the show, and thought it was all very well, but a little excess of monkey!

Her family's preeminence helps to explain brother Austin's indifference to gossip during his 13-year affair with Mabel Todd, the wife of the college astronomer. The enormous documentation of life in and around "The Homestead" supporting Richard Sewall's invaluable biography is testimony to the family position. Emily's refusal to follow the church's

paths of accommodation and solace, her very seclusion physically, suggests independence from pride of station. After all, her grandfather went through his money helping to found Amherst College because he wanted to "repel" the "errors" being propagated from Unitarian Harvard. Emily visited Boston twice—to consult an eye doctor. "We," she said of Amherst, "were rich in disdain for Bostonians and Boston." How different from Europeanized Henry James: "I don't even dislike it!"

Even before her 30s, when the stress of the Civil War drove her to write a



EMILY DICKINSON BY JACK COUGHLIN

hearken. Give but a small sign./I am quite near.")

The humor of Dickinson's verbal relation to God—she had no other—is not antic or skeptical, but supple. God is a name, a tradition, a memory, "Father." But how else, where else, when does He show His hand except as a circumference—her magic word—that encloses us? The Old Testament tradition is that God's universe is one of deeds, not words. But only words are left to the modern poet—she was the first to come out of New England—as the rim of circumference recedes

poem almost every day, she more and more "kept to home." She stopped visiting brother Austin and his wife, Susan, 300 feet away. The two houses were half-hidden by evergreens. It is to Susan, who thought the original second stanza of "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers" inadequate, that we owe the breathtaking second stanza of 1861:

Grand go the Years—in the Crescent—
above them—
Worlds scoop their Arcs—
And Firmaments—row—
Diadems—drop—and Doges—surrender—
Soundless as dots—on a Disc of Snow—

IN "The Homestead" she was born; there she died at 56. Except for the 15 years in which the family occupied another house, on Pleasant Street, she lived for more than 40 years in one house and on its grounds. Well into the 20th century her house was surrounded by red barns and extensive fields. Amherst was backed up by farm country on every side. One of the poet's essential activities was registering the effect of the "blue" mountains surrounding her valley, the Pelham hills on the horizon, the changing shades and weight of weather in every season, the light, the insects and snakes in her garden.

Nature was the most physical part of her life. Unlike us, who now know nature as a government park, a preserve, to enjoy on holiday, she had it every instant all around her. Nature was *the* event in her life, constant inimitable process in reality, the great process unrolling our dreamlike passage through existence.

Not being a romantic or transcendentalist, Dickinson did not find God in Nature. She did not find Nature a consoling simile for His absence, or what she concluded was "condensed presence." God was a "distant, stately lover." He was one character in the eternal drama of things passing, life passing:

I have a King, who does not speak—
So—wondering—thro' the hours meek
I trudge the day away—

On occasion God could even be "Burglar, Banker." She said her father worshiped an "Eclipse." How different to come back to Whitman, who said—at least he hoped—that "an individual is as superb as a nation when he has the qualities which make a superb nation. The soul of the largest and proudest nation may well go half-way to meet that of its poets."

Nor would Dickinson have agreed

with Whitman that death was the ultimately erotic-mystical event rejoining us to the elements of which we were first composed. It was just another event, the last, one that clearly ended on this side of the grave, when consciousness ended. But as all fear may be fear of what we cannot know, so Nature sends intimations of death. The very light of winter afternoons in the Connecticut Valley, as I have reason to remember, can strike dread. It struck *her* with a force that only her genius could have split into such different corridors of feeling:

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons—

That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes—

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us— . . .

"Heavenly" has to do with distance, not grace. This great poem is about what Goethe called man's highest response to the universe, our "shudder of awe." Inside was the little factory in the corner bedroom that produced almost 1,800 poems, thousands of letters; inside was the writing table, the sleigh bell, the Franklin stove, the dresser, the windows, her view of the front walk and the driveway, the Seth Thomas clock, the ruby decanter, the hatbox,

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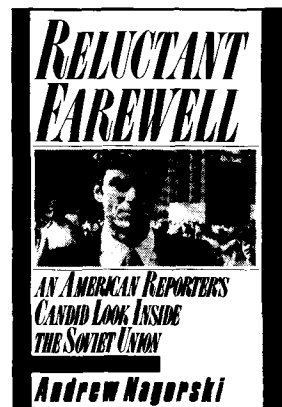
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the pictures of George Eliot, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Thomas Carlyle. But!

Had I not seen the Sun
I could have borne the shade
But Light a newer Wilderness
My Wilderness has made—

Unlike most of Amherst, she had, professionally, nothing to do but look.

I dwell in Possibility—
A fairer House than Prose
More numerous of Windows—
Superior—for Doors—
Of Chambers as the Cedars—
Impregnable of Eye—
And for an Everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky—
Of Visitors—the fairest—
For Occupation—This—
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise—

Yeats said that the death of God was but a play. But Emily Dickinson, had she been present in Washington on March 4, 1865, to hear Abraham Lincoln deliver his second inaugural, would have been likely to agree with that other lonely American thinker, one of her few peers in 19th-century America for stoic independence from church clichés:

Both [North and South] read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged.... The Almighty has His own purposes.

LIFE passing, life as the fullness of our struggle against extinction, life lived to some extreme consciousness showing just where we are, is her ultimate theme:

These are the days when Birds come back—
A very few—a Bird or two—
To take a backward look.

And: "I would eat evanescence slowly." Such interjections tell us what despair has always meant, and why religious thinking survives us even when "Father" is not exactly where He used to be in the childhood of the world, as He first made it.

She was just 30 in the first years of the Civil War, and was perhaps giving up hope that her outward life would change:

Dare you see a Soul at the White Heat?
Then crouch within the door—

At times she must have felt unhinged. One of her greatest poems describes herself at the end as "Wrecked, solitary, here." But finally accepting her life (if

she ever did accept it) as the round of life she had always lived (at least it left her free as a writer, impelled her to write), she was able to make some supreme poems out of the return of the seasons, the fall of light, the spring of birds, "the angle of a landscape," the leaves that "like women interchange," "the dandelion's pallid tube."

There came a Day at Summer's full,
Entirely for me—
I thought that such were for the Saints,
Where Resurrections—be— □

CORRESPONDENCE, from page 6

reconstruction of our work, will meet with the approval of the overwhelming majority of Democrats and represent a responsible and thoughtful alternative to the foreign policy of the Reagan administration.

STEPHEN J. SOLARZ
*House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.*

Christopher Layne replies:

Apologies to Stephen Solarz. On Cambodia I failed to make clear that the views described were his own and not reflected in the task force's draft report. Nevertheless, I stand by my article and its description of the draft report. The report is framed in the rhetoric of Carterism, as anyone who reads it will see.

GILDED BARBECUE

To the editors:

As an admirer of both the scholar and the senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, it is with a sense of sorrow that I write to correct an error in his Stockman-LaRouche article ("Political AIDS," May 26). He compares present-day Washington to "Mark Twain's Great Barbecue." Mark Twain gave us the Gilded Age; Vernon Louis Parrington is the author of the Great Barbecue metaphor.

G. L. SELIGMANN
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The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

TRB, from page 4

about to take it over). And what about bad news? Your shareholders don't lose anything if you sell your shares without telling them, and they can't possibly gain from your making the bad news public sooner. Yet all these inside trades seem as unfair as the first kind.

The SEC has an alternative theory called "misappropriation." Under this theory an appeals court recently upheld the conviction of R. Foster Wynans, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter who gave his friends advance word of stocks he was about to recommend. The idea is that the value of the *Journal's* recommendations belong to the *Journal*, not to the reporter. But surely the people Wynans cheated were not the shareholders of Dow Jones, which owns the *Journal*. The judge's remark that it would be perfectly O.K. for the *Journal* itself to profit secretly from advance knowledge of its own stock tips seems absurd, yet it naturally follows from the theory.

We'd be far better off with straightforward rules recognizing that the unfairness of insider trading is not to the other party in particular trades but to all other players in the stock market. But no regulatory theory, however strict, can eliminate all or even most of the unfair advantage on Wall Street. Most people acting on inside information may not even know for sure where it came from or whether any particular item is reliable. But insiders, in the broadest sense, get information that is better on average than what outsiders get. No fancy conspiracies are necessary, of the sort that SEC investigators have been exposing. It all happens in the general swap meet of Wall Street gossip. That's why the market responds to almost every major takeover several days before it's announced.

The high-powered arbitrageurs (i.e., speculators) who are attracting so much suspicious attention barely need to lift a finger, let alone break the law, to get privileged information about the future direction of stock prices. Informally cluing in the "arbs" is a standard part of any takeover attempt, because their activity adds pressure on management to make a deal. At this point, the mere fact that a leading arbitrageur is thought to be buying a stock is enough to send its price up.

It's almost enough to make you feel sorry for those guys who got caught.

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Threats

NO SOONER HAD TNR chided the Cassandra Chorus of nuclear-obsessed Boston medical practitioners for their uncharacteristic silence about the Chernobyl nuclear disaster than two of its members went into print with a letter to the *Boston Globe* (May 27) that is beyond satire. Harvard psychiatrists John E. Mack and Eric Chivian broke their silence not to join the alarm about Chernobyl, but rather to endorse the Soviet government's failure to inform either its own people or its neighbors about the calamity. The Soviets, the good doctors explained, "downplay catastrophes . . . in order to prevent emotional distress." This, of course, is a virtue: "we would do well to ask ourselves about the potential damaging effects, particularly for our children, of our own media's obsession with the horror-filled details of every event, however insignificant." Note the implication that Chernobyl was insignificant. Try to imagine these physicians saying the same of Three Mile Island, where no one died. But there's more. "The Soviets see the West's mass media, with their constant focus on crises and bad news, as having a destructive influence on individuals and society. . . ." What Mack and Chivian portentously call "our research at Harvard" concluded that, thanks to their government's more sophisticated approach, "Soviet youth were significantly more optimistic about the prospects for world peace than American young people." I can understand why the Soviets would wish to displace blame for Chernobyl onto the West and its hysterical habits. But it is really grotesque to hear this accusation coming from men who, with their overwrought physician colleagues, have done more to make panic the preferred mode of thinking about nuclear questions than anyone else in our society. Mack has written a psychologically inventive and, alas, historically innocent biography of Lawrence of Arabia. Another Cambridge doctor suggests, perhaps waggishly, that Mack's admiration for Lawrence may explain why he is drawn to mischievous fantasies of the virtues of a foreign people and the sins of his own. I wish the explanation were that interesting; in any case, it wouldn't explain the motives of Mack's associates. I am afraid that here is a most brazen but simple case of what

used to be called "fellow-traveling." It is what I have long suspected about much of the leadership of the physicians' movement. Nothing about its behavior in the wake of Chernobyl, or regarding the fate of dissident medical scientists in the USSR who have dared to criticize Soviet nuclear policy, changes my mind.

AS WE'VE TRIED TO MAKE everybody aware by now, the first references to Kurt Waldheim's career as a Nazi were in these pages, initially (TNR, January 19, 1980) in a profile by the eminent novelist Shirley Hazzard, who had worked in the United Nations Secretariat, and subsequently (TNR, September 27, 1980, and March 7, 1981) in remarks on this page by yours truly. Of course, we did not have much of the detail that has since been exhumed from the archives. But no one else seemed especially exercised by the revelation, and no one was intrigued enough to follow up on our lead. Of course in retrospect, I ruefully admit, publishing a world-class scoop as a casual aside buried in a longer story is as much a journalistic embarrassment as it is something to brag about. The failure to recognize and pursue this story is ours as much as it is the rest of the media's.

THIS FAILURE DIDN'T ENTIRELY reassure Dr. Waldheim, though. Shortly after one of my references to him, I was paid a visit by a former student, Tom Reston. Reston, son of the columnist, was a public affairs apparatchik in the Carter State Department. Now Carter was out, and Reston was looking to join a law firm. Fine, but what did he want from me? He did not seem anxious to come to the point. Finally he told me he did already have a client, an important client: Kurt Waldheim. The rest tumbled out quickly. What we'd printed about Waldheim was a lie. If we didn't desist we'd find ourselves in a libel suit. I told Reston to advise his client that if Waldheim sued us, he would find himself in discovery proceedings. That was the last we heard about a libel suit. Now we know why.

I AM JUST BACK FROM ISRAEL, where, after only 22 months of the sensibly idealistic leadership of Shimon Peres, something of the old incandescence has been restored to the Zionist enterprise, de-

based over seven years by the churlish fanaticism of Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, who unfortunately becomes prime minister again in October. The most striking change is in the economy, where hyperinflation verging on 1,000 percent has been brought down to a mere 25 percent or so. The nasty edge of Israel's domestic politics has also been blunted. One reason is that the annexationist designs for the biblical territories of Judea and Samaria no longer seem so desirable, even to many in the nationalist Likud. Still, there is no ease in Zion. Right now the country is struggling once more with vexing ethical questions forced upon it by the bad neighborhood in which it lives. Tom Friedman put it this way in the *New York Times*: "Can military and security officials . . . be realistically expected to deal with terrorists as armed, mortal enemies until a capture, then suddenly choke off emotions and treat them calmly, according them the rights the law implies?" The case involves two Palestinian terrorists who died after they were seized during the hijack of a bus. It is particularly serious because security services appeared to have lied to a judicial inquiry. A Druse member of the Knesset voiced the prevailing regional view of such matters when he confessed he couldn't understand why the Israelis are tearing each other apart over two dead terrorists. It is to their credit that some Israelis still insist on doing just that. But, alas, the prime minister is not on their side.

BUT THE GREATEST THREAT to Israel, I believe, is not the democratic ambiguities of a nation under siege, and not the Arabs either. It is the ultraorthodox Jews, perfervid brothers under the skin of Sunni and Shiite fundamentalists, who are attempting to turn Israel into an Iran-like theocracy. Every little victory for these backward Jews in Israel drives or keeps other Jews out of the country. An ad in the June 1 *New York Times* by some of these Khomeinist rabbis calls Mayor Kollek "Teddy the Terrorist" for insisting on the plural and open character of the holy city. These rabbis might just as well be agents of Yasir Arafat.

M. P.

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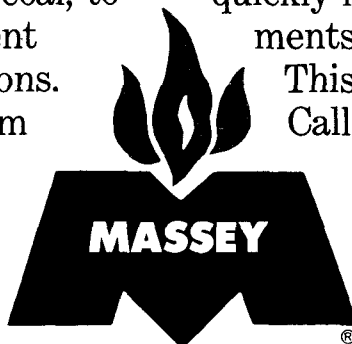
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